



**St Giles on the Heath with Northcott Hamlet
Parish Council**

“Working with you, For you”

(draft) MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON

Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 7.00pm

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr Atkinson (Chairman), Cllr K Hamlyn, Cllr Bowyer, Cllr Fisher, Cllr Russell, Cllr Paulger, Cllr Dimmock, Cllr Gearing, Cllr Stott, Cllr Williams, Cllr Curtis. **In attendance:** Clerk Kayleigh Walker, District Cllr Gibson, members of the public: 1 (co-option applicant).

1. PUBLIC SESSION

1.1 None.

2. RECEIVING APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 District Cllr Hackett and County Cllr Rowsell - apologies accepted.

2.2 Cllrs Fisher and Bowyer declared an interest in the Womans Guild grant application and it was noted that all Councillors know two of the grass cutting tender applicants as they are local to the parish.

3. Co-option

3.1 Cllrs reviewed the one co-option application that was received and invited the applicant to express why she wished to join the council. Cllr Russell proposed the co-option of the applicant; the motion was seconded by Cllr Stott and unanimously agreed by all councillors. The applicant, Sharon Bray was invited to join the councillors' table and completed the declaration of acceptance to office.

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on January 13th, 2026, were previously circulated. Proposed by Cllr Hamlyn as a true record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Stott and agreed by all. The Chairman signed a copy.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 None.

6. REVIEWING ONGOING MATTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 County councillor report - none.

6.2 District councillors' report - Cllr Hackett provided a report by email. 'I have a Highways HATOC meeting Monday 16th and will be bringing up the deterioration of our local roads which are in an increasingly serious state of repair. I secured a meeting with Alison Hernandez the Police and Crime Commissioner last Friday at Bideford to look at the policing issues in Northern Devon. Of the 36 Torridge District Councillors, only 8 attended, including from the Holsworthy area Ken James, Nigel Kenneally and myself as chair. As I sit on the Police and Crime Panel I chaired the meeting and was keen to impress upon her the problems that the royal villages suffer, and with speeding, theft of farm and sports equipment including tractors, and sports equipment. Several local football clubs had ride on tractor mowers stolen last year. We had a very stimulating Q&A session and she was left in no doubt of the rural policing challenges we have and the importance of our PCSOs, a force she is going to increase. I would ask councillors to look at the latest C&R meeting held a couple of weeks ago which was recorded and is available on the TDC YouTube channel. There was a budget presentation which graphically shows how central government is cutting funding to all rural District Councils. Our financial situation will be very challenging in a couple of years' time.'

6.3 New website update - Cllr Williams confirmed the new website was now live and the old one would be removed as soon as possible.

6.4 Grass cutting tenders - Councillors reviewed the four tenders received. For financial reasons, the two highest quotations were discounted. The remaining two submissions were then compared in detail. It was agreed that both applicants should be contacted to clarify the contract requirements. This will include providing a map of all areas to be covered, confirming that the edges of the play area are to be trimmed, that the first two cuts are to be collected and removed from site, and that subsequent cuts are to be mulched with grass cuttings blown back onto the grassed areas to maintain a tidy appearance. The Clerk was asked to propose the inclusion of a one-year break clause and a three-month notice period for termination within the contract terms. She was also asked to ensure that the section at Pinslow is included and to request that each contractor provide an additional quotation to cover the area up to the planter at Pinslow. Councillors agreed that a final decision will be made by 1st March.

6.5 Grant applications - Cllrs reviewed the five grant applications that were received. Councillor Bray abstained from voting on all grants due to not having seen the applications.

Chairman Sign and date1.....



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- St Giles on the Heath Primary School FPTA - the Clerk shared the financial information to support the application. Councillors agreed to support the organisation and awarded a £300 grant. This was proposed by Cllr Curtis, seconded by Cllr Fisher and unanimously agreed.

- St Giles Womens Guild - Cllrs Fisher, Bowyer and Atkinson declared interests as committee member, treasurer and member. Cllrs reviewed the application form and financial data provided and discussed the groups contribution to the community. Cllr Curtis proposed a £300 grant to cover the costs of hall hire and speakers. The motion was seconded by Cllr Paulger and agreed by all members with Cllrs Fisher and Bowyer abstaining.

- St Giles Short Mat Bowls - Cllrs reviewed the application and supporting financial data and discussed the projected costs that would be incurred by the group for replacement mats. Cllrs considered the community impact the group has and made a decision based on current circumstances. Cllr Hamlyn proposed a grant of £200, this was seconded by Cllr Dimmock and unanimously agreed. It was proposed that the Council also offer support to the group by assisting with applying for grants which may be available from other organisations such as Active Torridge.

- St Giles Cemetery - as no financial information had been received the grant was not considered. The Clerk will ask the organisation to provide this to enable the grant to be considered at the next meeting.

- Citizens Advice - Cllrs reviewed the request and agreed not to make a financial contribution but to offer to cover the costs of hiring the hall to enable the organisation to offer a drop in surgery to parishioners. Proposed by Cllr Russell, seconded by Cllr Bowyer and unanimously agreed.

6.6 Primary school consultation letter - Cllrs reviewed the correspondence and agreed the proposal to join the Carey Federation would be a positive step forward for the school and provide some stability, staff development opportunities and continuity for the children. The Clerk was asked to submit a comment of support. The motion was proposed by Cllr Stott, seconded by Cllr Fisher and unanimously agreed.

6.7 Connectivity Forum - a follow up from the event issued by Sir Geoffrey Cox MP was circulated ahead of the meeting. The Chairman and Clerk shared feedback confirming the event had been insightful. Cllr Williams added that it was disappointing not to have heard back from Bush Broadband having contacted them for assistance after the meeting.

6.8 Community Conversations event - details about an online event hosted by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service focusing on community risk management plans taking place on March 6th at 12noon were shared.

6.9 Overgrown vegetation in Crockers Way - the Clerk was asked to write to the occupants of the property with the prickly bush that is overhanging the footpath asking them to cut it back.

7. REVIEWING PROGRESS OF COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

7.1 Speedwatch update - the Chairman advised that no sessions had taken place.

7.2 Playground update - the playground inspection report from PlaySafety and the refurbishment quotation provided by Sovereign were circulated prior to the meeting and duly considered. Cllr Stott reported that she had explored potential funding opportunities and found that very few grants are currently available to parish councils. Members agreed that any improvements to the playground should only proceed if the Council is confident it can continue to maintain the equipment in the long term. In response to the inspection report, councillors agreed that the items identified as requiring immediate repair or replacement must be addressed as a priority. It was also agreed that a sign should be erected on the rota web to restrict its use until it has been removed from the site. Members further agreed on the importance of taking a long-term view of the playground and considering whether, in light of financial constraints, the site may need to be scaled back to a picnic and soft ball area rather than investing in new equipment. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation from TK Play for the removal of the rota web and for repairs to the other items of equipment that received the highest risk scores in the inspection report. The action was proposed by Cllr Stott, seconded by Cllr Paulger, and agreed unanimously. Cllr Paulger asked the District Cllr if it there would be any scope to purchase or inherit playground equipment that TDC are replacing but is still in good condition. Cllr Gibson could not confirm but stated that it would be unlikely due to the equipment being past its lifetime, risk factors and costs.

*** Cllr Stott was excused from the remainder of the meeting at 9pm***

7.3 Emergency plan update - Cllr Bray presented a proposed work plan outlining the steps required to develop an emergency plan and highlighted potential funding opportunities. The Clerk confirmed that she has applied for the initial £250 grant to support the organisation of a public meeting.



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Councillors and residents interested in contributing to the project are encouraged to contact Sharon. The importance of strong community engagement was emphasised.

The next step will be to establish a sub-committee to oversee the project and arrange the first public meeting, which is anticipated to take place in March.

7.4 community CCTV project - the Chairman reported that a meeting had taken place between the parish council, the Coronation Hall, the skittles teams, the Community Shop Project and the shop tenant to discuss the project and all parties were supportive in principle. Quotes for suitable equipment are awaited and will be followed by a meeting to determine if the project will be sustainable long term.

8. FINANCES

8.1 Authorisation of expenses – Coronation Hall hall hire for February meeting £22, Coronation Hall hire for CCTV meeting £22, playground inspection £328. Accounts proposed for payment by Cllr Russel, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and agreed by all.

8.2 Current account as of 17th January 2026 - £8454.32.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 The Clerk shared the response from the Neighbourhood Highways Officer with regard to the flooding in the village which read ‘Following my site inspection, I have issued a letter to the landowner requesting that they clear the ditch located on the opposite side of the hedge to the highway. Once this work has been completed, we anticipate that it will help resolve the water build- up currently affecting the road. We will continue to monitor this location once the landowner has carried out the necessary work to ensure all assets are functioning as they should.’

9.2 The Clerk was asked to report a fault to highways for the malfunctioning light on the main road through the village by the Moorfield Road junction.

9.3 The Clerk was asked to report a pot hole outside the village on the way to Chapmans Well to highways.

9.4 The Clerk was asked to add ‘village newsletter’ to the agenda for the next meeting.

10. NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

10.1 Next Parish Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 7th April 2026 7pm followed by Tuesday 19th May 2026.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

11.1 Meeting closed 21:15pm.