



STARCROSS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Starcross Parish Council held in Starcross Pavilion on Tuesday 8 July 2025 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllrs Hopper (Chairman), Allen, Cadbury, Coupe, Lovell, Pegg, Phillips and Rastall

Also present:

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Connett, District Cllr Taylor and two members of the public

RESIDENTS' QUESTION TIME

The Chairman invited questions/comments from residents.

No comments.

080725.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr McNally
- Cllr Chase
- Cllr Williamson

080725.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

080725.03 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members present received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 10 June 2025.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY by those members present that these minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of that meeting.

080725.04 ACTION REPORT

In future, outstanding actions will be dealt with under the relevant Committee report.

080725.05 CRIME & SPEEDWATCH REPORT

Crime

During the period 1 – 30 June, there were eight recorded offences:

Domestic (civil dispute) x 1, RTC (slight injury) x 1, Theft x 1, Criminal damage x 3, Dog bite (to child) x 1, Domestic assault x 1

Community Speedwatch

No report

080725.06 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Connett advised that he had been contacted by residents about the overgrowing vegetation in the drainage channels behind Sercombes Gardens. Teign Housing will tend to it.

With regard the Powderham concert last week and following the feedback from local residents about traffic management and parking arrangements particularly affecting Kenton, he advised that he has drawn up a report (copy circulated to Kenton and Starcross Parish Councils) and will be taking up the issues with Devon County Council highways and also the Castle. Concerts and other events not only help the Castle, but provide joy and entertainment for many thousands of people who attend. However, if it is at all possible, problems from parking and traffic management need to be minimised. It is understood that the Promoters are responsible for the traffic management arrangements which are agreed with the County Council. In previous years, both Kenton and Starcross Parish Councils have been consulted by the Estate/Promoters for the larger concerns to ensure that both Councils had an opportunity to provide input into the arrangements. This has not happened this year.

County Cllr Connett also circulated the following report concerning wider issues:

Lorries, coaches and caravans using the Mamhead route from Haldon to Starcross:

Arising from a number of recent incidents and complaints from residents, I have again asked Devon County Council to consider a weight limit for the Mamhead Road. The council's reply is below:

"Since 2000, the regulations and guidance surrounding the implementation of weight restrictions have evolved significantly, making the process far from straightforward. For any restriction to be legally enforceable, it must be supported by a formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Unless a restriction is required due to a structurally weak road or bridge, any weight limit must include the caveat "except for access". This allows for essential deliveries and access to properties but makes enforcement by the Police extremely difficult. As a result, such restrictions have often proven to be ineffective.

Introducing a weight restriction is a legally complex, time-consuming, and costly process. It typically costs several thousand pounds and can take many months—or even years—to complete, depending on the level of public objection received (which is almost always the case). Given these challenges and the limited likelihood of effective enforcement, it is not considered a good use of our constrained resources to pursue such restrictions unless absolutely necessary.

Our approach is to positively sign the most appropriate routes, rather than placing signs on roads that are unsuitable for certain classes of vehicles. In this case, advisory signs are already in place, and there is a clearly signed route via the main roads into the area. Furthermore, if large vehicles are already ignoring advisory signage, often guided by satellite navigation, then converting this to an enforceable restriction is unlikely to change driver behaviour, especially when enforcement capacity is limited or unavailable."

Devon trials pothole repair blitz as part of £83 million road maintenance programme

Devon County Council highways teams will carry out a repair blitz on potholes in a few trial areas of the county following a decision by Councillors.

While approving an £83 million programme of capital funded highway maintenance schemes, Councillor Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, stated that the condition of Devon's roads is not up to scratch because the county is "grossly under resourced by central government".

Councillors backed proposals to trial areas where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects.

Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/council-to-trial-pothole-repair-blitz-as-part-of-83-million-road-maintenance-programme/>

ends..

Improving EHCP assessment timeliness

We know how important timely support is for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), says Devon County Council.

That's why improving the speed and efficiency of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments is a top priority for the authority.

Right now, around 1,400 children are going through the statutory assessment process in Devon, which is significantly more than in many similar local authorities.

We recognise this can cause delays, and we are taking steps to change that and make the process quicker and smoother, without compromising on quality or fairness. We're also trialling a new approach to speed up the initial decision about whether to carry out an EHCP assessment. The new timescales will be:

- For practitioner requests (e.g. from a school or health service): decisions will be made within **2 weeks**
- For parental requests: decisions will be made within **4 weeks** (to give us time to collect any extra information from schools or other services that might help us decide whether an assessment is needed)

This is a big step forward from the current 6-week decision period, and it's designed to get children the support they need more quickly.

Our educational psychology team will be completing more assessments by pausing some aspects of their work. They are focusing in improving the speed that their advice is provided, and they have refreshed their reports to ensure they are clear and accessible.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/working-together-to-improve-ehcp-assessment-timeliness/>

The NHS Healthy Start scheme helps young families on low incomes to buy healthy food and milk.

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have children under four and receive certain benefits, you could be eligible for NHS Healthy Start. Once on the scheme, you'll receive a prepaid card, which you can use to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula. The card will be topped up with payments every four weeks and you can use it in most places that sell healthy food and accept Mastercard® payments. You can also get free Healthy Start vitamins. Find out if you're eligible for NHS Healthy Start and [apply online now](https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/nhs-healthy-start-scheme-helps-young-families-on-low-incomes/) <https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/nhs-healthy-start-scheme-helps-young-families-on-low-incomes/>

Cllr Rastall asked whether there was any update on the cycle path improvements. Cllr Connett confirmed there is money in the budget and it is in DCC's programme for this financial year. As he understand it, they are looking for an appropriate solution for the Bonhay Road/Well Street. He will continue to follow this up.

District Cllr Taylor noted that the path to the thatched shelter and the area around the tables on the Strand has been mown.

TDC has opened a consultation about local government reform: [\(https://news.teignbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-local-government-in-devon/\)](https://news.teignbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-local-government-in-devon/) and has arranged a number of informal drop-in sessions across the district this July. The closest to Starcross is in the Manor House, Dawlish on 21 July, 6-8pm.

The District Councillors' community fund is now open for applications for a small grant towards community projects. Similarly, the County Councillor's Locality Budget is also open for applications.

080725.07

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Hopper, Chase, Rastall, Coupe & Phillips)

- 7.1 **Financial Report** – members received and noted the financial report 9 June – 6 July 2025 and were asked to approve the payments listed (copy attached).
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the payments listed are made.

- 7.2 Proposal: To approve the decision by the Finance & Governance Committee regarding the storage facility on the sports field and our contact with Starcross Dons FC (copy of F&G Committee Minutes and letter to Starcross Dons circulated)
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Rastall

AGREED BY MAJORITY to approve the decision by the Finance & Governance Committee regarding the storage facility and contact with Starcross Dons FC.
(3 members abstained having not seen the report)

ACTION: None further required

- 7.3 Proposal: To approve Committee membership, as previously outlined
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Rastall

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the Committee membership, as circulated.

7.4 **General Report/Question & Answers**

- Standing Orders and Finance Regulations will go on a future agenda.
- A response has been received from TDC about acquiring land on the Strand beyond the white gate up to the path. TDC would be more interested in the Parish Council taking over the whole area, excluding the car park. This will be added to September's agenda for further discussion.

080725.08 PLANNING
(Cllrs Pegg, Cadbury & McNally)

Whole Council to Debate (accompanying documents)

- 8.1 **New applications/appeals**
None
- 8.2 **Decisions:**
None
- 8.3 General Report/Question & Answers
None

080725.09 PAVILION, SPORTSFIELD AND BOATPARK
(Cllrs Rastall, Hopper, Pegg, Coupe & Williamson)

- 9.1 Proposal: To reimburse Cllr Hopper a total of £25.30 for items purchased for the Pavilion Café and Annual Parish Meeting
Proposer: Cllr Rastall; Seconder: Cllr Coupe

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to reimburse Cllr Hopper £25.30, as proposed.

ACTION: Clerk to refund

- 9.2 Proposal: To accept the quote from Steve Swift to clear the area east side of sportsfield car park and footpath, add topsoil and sow with grass seed - £1700
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Rastall

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to accept the quote from Steve Swift, as proposed.

ACTON Clerk to raise PO
FUNDING Precept Field Maintenance

Committee Chair Report:

- 9.3 General Report/Questions & Answers
Cllr Lovell has kindly taken over the responsibility of the library and will monitor how often it is used.

Kenton Primary School has requested to use the Pavilion for a few days at the end of term. The Pavilion is not available for two of the mornings, so they will use it in the afternoons and set up a marquee on the field in the mornings.

Committee Chair Report:

10.1 General Report/Questions & Answers

The Strand is extremely tidy and is looking at its very best with trimmed grass and flourishing shrubs since the removal of the brambles covering them. The planters are spectacular, with an interesting mix of colourful flowering. Megan and her team of helpers have had to contend with watering them in the heat wave. The work of undercutting and shaping the shrubs and the colourful flowers has made it an impressive frontage. The official planters, around the village, in the memorial garden and at the entrances to the village are all in full bloom despite the heat and lack of rain. The areas of land beyond our control are not so attractive. The Strand section near the car park is roughly cut and rubbish has been left behind. The frontage by the Atmospheric car park is once again neglected so may need a letter to the new owners. The railings alongside the road are in a poor state of repair. Parts are rusty, missing or bent, and the gaps are encouraging pedestrians to cross the road in a number of places. Previously, the Chair wrote to the tenant asking them to tidy it up.

The play park is looking neat and generally well maintained. The lawn grass has survived the heat wave and not required cutting due to the lack of rain. However, the wild variety of grass growing in the designated nature area is very long and not so inviting and needs managing. The climbing logs are now invisible from a distance and not so user friendly for climbing on. The willows have grown to a height making it possible to create a structure. The fruit trees are growing well and there are damsons ripening. The wild flowers are the most common varieties to be found locally. To make it more diverse we need seeds from elsewhere. This area needs to be managed in future by our experts in the Wildlife group, and not just allowed to get overgrown. Field bindweed, or *Convolvulus arvensis*, is invasive and taking over in the hedgerow. The flowers have an alkaline sap which can cause skin irritations for some people. A public notice explaining the purpose of this area and our plans for its development would be useful.

The apparatus is generally in good repair. The surface under the basket swing is wearing but not unsightly. The grass under the picnic table is managing to grow so no problem this dry weather. Comments I have received suggest that new seats on the small swings would encourage more use. Also, that small football nets would prevent balls being booted strongly into the play area. The rest is well used, especially by the younger children and parents are full of praise for what is provided. The only area yet to be developed is the community corner which could provide year-long sheltered access for all ages and abilities. This can only be achieved in the future through applying for grants and submitting our approved plans with costings.

There are some minor issues regarding maintenance. Grass has started to grow in the cracks between the rubber mats under the swings and in areas of the concrete pad. The grass has been worn away and there are patches under the swing. There have been problems with the catches on the small gates. It was noted, however, that Cllr Rastall has now fitted a new latch on one of the gates and another gate doesn't need a latch at all as it shuts automatically. There has also been a plea for a litter/dog bin at the Peacock Place entrance, near the picnic table.

Concerns were raised about the pile of grass cuttings at the end of the playpark. The Chair offered to write to the contractor.

Concerns were expressed about the length of the grass and nettles in the wildlife area which is now covering the logs which children climb on. This requires strimming to make the area safe.

The play park is developing well, but a shortage of time and physical action restricts what can be achieved in the short term.

080725.11 EXTERNAL PROJECTS
(Cllrs Coupe, Hopper & Williamson)

In future, this item will be combined with Working Party Reports and Non-Committee items.

080725.12 WORKING PARTY REPORTS

In future, this item will be combined with External Projects and Non-Committee items.

Cllr Phillips will lead a Working Party (*Cllrs Phillips, Lovell and Allen*) to survey the pavements in the parish. They will aim to complete this in time for September's meeting.

080725.13 NON-COMMITTEE ITEMS

In future, this item will be combined with External Projects and Working Party Reports.

080725.14 RESIDENTS' CORRESPONDENCE

In future, this will be moved to the beginning of the agenda.

080725.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday 9 September 2025** in the Pavilion commencing at 7.30pm.

SIGNED:
Chairman of the Parish Council

DATE: 9 September 2025

Note: Where a document or paper is referred to on the Agenda, this document will be available on request from the Clerk by emailing starcrossp for cclerk@gmail.com

Starcross Parish Council Finance Report – 8 July 2025

Summary of Bank Balances at 6 July 2025	
Current (C)	£32,907.44
Pavilion Trading (P)	£7,317.73
Allocated Reserves (A)	£71,533.18
Total	£111,758.35

Income: 9 June – 6 July 2025		
Pavilion hire	£108	P
Bank interest (30 June)	£66.77	A

Payments for approval			
Clerk	Salary & disbursements (July & August)	£1226.94	C
HMRC	Employer NI contributions (Q1)	£70.18	C
TDC	Emptying of dog/litter bins 2025-26	£5468.40	C
Plant Tech	Grass cutting & maintenance (June)	£1113.12	C
M&D Hire	Repairs to exterior Pavilion steps	£1300.80	P
J Hopper	Reimbursement for items purchased for Pavilion Café (see item 9.1 July)	£25.30	P
T Greenslade	Pavilion - cleaning, fobbing, supplies	£224.63	P

Direct Debit: 9 June – 6 July 2025			
Bankline (16/6)	Banking fees	£24.05	C
Octopus Energy (19/6)	Electricity/Gas	£80.58	C
Talk Talk (16/6)	Pavilion telephone & broadband	£31.92	P
Biffa (23/6)	Waste bin at Pavilion (rental & collection)	£51.54	P

Clerk (June & July)	Salary	Tax	Net	Disbursements
Salary	£1,145.90	-	£1,145.90	
Telephone and Internet	-	-	-	£10.00
Using home as an office	-	-	-	£17.34
Mileage @ 45p per mile	-	-	-	£15.30
Quickbooks	-	-	-	£38.40
TOTAL				£1226.94