**MINUTES**

1 **Apologies**

There were no apologies received by the Chair.

2 **Public Question Time**

1. Public Question Time, Current Matters

A public member proposed that current issues be addressed during the public question time. Nonetheless, as per the Burlescombe Parish Council's Standing Orders (Section 3, Sub-section 28), public contributions are limited to agenda items during the open forum.

1. Clerk’s Salary

A public member observed that the Clerk’s salary, at 41% of the precept, is excessive given the reduction of Council meetings from ten to four. Yet, the Council's calendar includes four Council meetings and initially three Community Group (previously the Community Advisory Board) meetings, which increased to four after public input.

It was also suggested cutting the Clerk's salary and bringing website management in-house. However, the salary, set by an employment contract, reflects the advertised and contractually agreed duties and amount, which had to be increased beyond the advised pay band to attract candidates.

1. Planning Committee

A public member recommended more frequent meetings for the Planning Committee than the current 12-week interval.

1. Aggregate Industries, Westleigh Quarry

Public concerns were voiced about safety risks from blasting to nearby pedestrians and equestrians.

1. Grounds Maintenance, Old Railway Line

A public member questioned why maintenance of the Old Railway Line by the prior contractor stopped and was informed it was due to their lack of insurance, resulting in their withdrawn quote.

The idea of a community volunteer day was raised and is set for discussion at the upcoming Community Group meeting.

1. Disorderly Conduct Notice

A community member expressed regret over the necessity of a disorderly conduct notice and was informed it was a recommended precaution due to past meetings involving precept discussions.

1. Community Grant, Burlescombe Primary School

A public member suggested allocating a portion of the community grant to the Primary School for teaching materials and environmental projects.

1. Chairmanship

A public member questioned if Cllr Worrow is required to stay on as Chairman. According to Burlescombe Parish Council's Standing Orders (Section 5, Sub-sections 55-56), the Chairman is elected annually and remains in office until a successor is chosen at the following annual meeting, unless they resign or are disqualified. There is no requirement of Cllr Worrow to stay on as Chairman.

1. Precept Proposal and Report

A member of the public recommended delineating negotiable and non-negotiable items in precept reports. The Chairman concurred to implement this in future documents.

1. Community Grants

Members of the public stressed the need to maintain grants, noting the financial burden on the Parish Council should the Church close. Consequently, the Council decided to keep the Cemetery Grants unchanged from the current year's budget.

1. Financial Reserves

A public member recalled former District Councillor Bob Evans' guidance on the precept and reserves. The Council reported its current reserve at £5,735.14, equating to 47.36% of the proposed precept.

1. Annual Parish Meeting

The 2024 Annual Parish Meeting was addressed, emphasising that reports from all key stakeholders are encouraged without the need for formal invitations.

1. Emergency Plan

The Emergency Plan is out of date, with public members calling for it to be updated.

This is set for discussion at the upcoming Community Group meeting.

1. Reduction in Meetings

Public attendees questioned the reduction in the number of meetings. Cllr Worrow explained that this was because the council, currently with only three out of seven members, lacked the necessary resources and availability for more frequent gatherings.

1. Minutes

A public member questioned the brevity of the meeting minutes. The Burlescombe Parish Council's Standing Orders require that minutes succinctly record the meeting's details, including time, location, attendees, conflicts of interest, public input, and decisions made (Section 3, Sub-section 42).

3 **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**

Cllr Worrow declared an interest under the Code of Conduct in relation to Westate Group.

4 **Precept**

Cllr Worrow presented the 2024/2025 precept proposal, highlighting the current economic challenges and the need for fiscal responsibility. The proposal included a reduction of £2,081.65, which represented a 15.55% decrease from the previous year. This reduction aimed to align expenditure with community needs.

Adjustments were made to the Clerk's budget for improved cost-effectiveness, and corporate membership with the Friends of the Grand Western Canal was discontinued. Community cemetery grants were closed, and a prudent approach to training and event expenses was explained.

The focus was on maintaining reserves for unforeseen costs, and it was outlined that the number of annual council meetings would be reduced from 10 to four for efficient governance. Cumulative savings resulting from these measures were highlighted, reflecting a commitment to financial prudence and community well-being.

Cllr Worrow underscored that this proposal is contingent upon community feedback and approval before it is officially ratified at a subsequent meeting.

5 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2023 be signed as a correct record.

6 **Chairman’s Announcements**

To receive any announcements which the Chairman of the Council may wish to make.

1. Community Group

Cllr Worrow invited members of the public to attend the next meeting of the Community Group on 11 January 2024. The Community Group serves as the voice of the community, and is intended to offer guidance, input, and feedback on matters affecting the parish.

7 **Petitions**

There were no petitions received by the Chair.

8 **Notices of Motions**

There we no motions from members of the council.

9 **Reports**

To receive and consider the reports, minutes and recommendations of the recent meetings as follows:

1. Clerk’s Report
	1. Expenditure Incurred Since Last Meeting:
		1. Westleigh URC Hall Hire 17/08 £7.00
		2. Uncontested Election Costs MDDC £127.35
		3. Burlescombe & Westleigh Hall Hire 23/09 £30.00
		4. Clerk’s Salary August, September, October 2023 - £393.38 each month
		5. V Ivanova – Website Annual Costs of Development for 2023 to 2026 - £1080.00
	2. Expenditure Approved at the Meeting:
		1. P3 PROW Clearance Final 2023 Invoice and Maintenance Work – Nicholas Page £286.00 & 262.00
		2. Clerk Salary November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 £393.38 each month
		3. Burlescombe & Westleigh Hall Hire 2/11 £30.00

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Lewis Worrow, **SECONDED** by Councillor Luke Trevelyan, and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk’s Report on Council Expenditure be approved.

1. Planning Committee
* Junction 27 Energy Hub (with Representations from Clearstone Energy) Consultation request - 23/01351/MFUL 18th September 2023 refers – Parish Council lodged their objections on behalf of local residents before the 9th October 2023 deadline. **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01306/CLU 18th August 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01141/FULL 29th September 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01419/FULL 10th October 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01520/FULL 10th October 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01605/HOUSE 16th October 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Consultation request - 23/01661/HOUSE 26th October 2023 **DECISION PENDING**
* Hartnoll Farm Application 21/01576/MOUT for expanding the business park and building up to 150 dwellings. It had been **Refused.** The Applicant had Appealed this decision but the Appeal has been dismissed.
* 23/01306/CLU Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of land for the siting of a mobile home for residential use, associated garden/amenity area and vehicular access for a period in excess of 10 years Location: Moorview Burlescombe Tiverton **APPROVED**
* 23/01485/NMA Non Material Amendment to Planning Permission 21/02217/HOUSE to insert window in East Elevation Location: Chapel Cottage Burlescombe Tiverton **APPROVED**
* 23/00526/HOUSE Erection of enlarged two storey extension and front porch following demolition of existing single and two storey extension and porch Location: Tulip Cottage Appledore Burlescombe Tiverton **REFUSED**
* 23/00911/FULL Erection of an agricultural storage building Location: Land at NGR 307874 115754 Valley View Burlescombe Devon **APPROVED**
1. Public Rights of Way (PROW)
* Cllr Worrow reported that the Council had been informed that it can only carry out works on the lands conveyed in title number DN614491 in relation to the Westleigh Quarry Trail.
1. Quarry Liaison Committee
* The Quarry Liaison Committee met on 9 October 2023.
* A formal complaint was lodged against Aggregate Industries by Burlescombe Parish Council for their blasting activities near Canonsleigh, citing significant discrepancies in the impact and effects of the blasts on August 16th and September 12th, 2023, and requested an explanation, re-evaluation of blasting activities, mitigation measures, and transparent communication moving forward.
* Members continue to discuss the use of the siren, but it was suggested that its reintroduction should be discussed with residents before any action is taken.
1. The Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee
* The Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee met on 3 October, 2023.
* The agenda and draft minutes of which are now available Mid Devon District Council’s website.

10 **Member’s Business**

There were no items raised by the Member’s.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was **AGREED** as Thursday, 1 February 2024 at 19:00.

The date of the next Community Group meeting was **AGREED** as Thursday, 11 January 2024 at 19:00.