

MORCHARD BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 1st December 2025 at 7.00pm

At Morchard Bishop Memorial Hall

Present: Simon Baker, (Chair), Dawn Parkhouse (Vice Chair), Sarah Gillbard, David Gillbard, Andy Hankins, Les Partridge, Sheila Sinclair, Debbie Ticehurst, Sarah Vere, and David Parker (Parish Clerk).
 Members of the Public attending: Tom Burnison, Nick Drake Browning, Sadie Bullock, Nicki Perry and Jeanette Richardson.

- 1. Apologies:** David Grant, Stephen Leese, County Councillor Steve Keable, District Councillor Helen Tuffin District Councillor Mark Jenkins.
- 2. Members of the Public** – A group of parents of pupils from Morchard Bishop Primary School raised concerns about the School reducing the length of wrap around care offered to pupils from between 7.30am until 5.30pm to 7.30am until 5.00pm and this notice being given only 3 weeks before the end of term. Those pupils attending Pre-School would also not be able to attend before or after school clubs. The parents did not believe that the reasons given tallied with their investigations into what other similar schools offered. Another complaint was the lack of communication, with the on-line portal having been taken down in September 2025 meaning that there was no communication possible with the school through this means, neither was it possible to speak with a teacher. When responses were received, they were inadequate. Eight children had left the school this term. Discussion took place as to whether parents or FOMBS could either assist with the wrap around care or the cost of providing it?

Jeanette Richardson attended to discuss the forthcoming Nativity Scene at the Bus Shelter. – All was in hand. She would send through a video of the Lighting-Up ceremony from last year, it was agreed to show this at the Coffee Morning on Saturday 6 December and to try and get it onto the Parish Council's website.

- 3. Academy Head of Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School** – Unfortunately Hanah Bancroft was not able to attend the meeting as arranged but would attend the meeting of the Parish Council in January.
- 4. The minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 November 2025 were approved - Proposed: Sheila Sinclair, seconded: Debbie Ticehurst - carried unanimously.
- 5. Matters Arising (not dealt with elsewhere in the minutes):**
 - Sarah Gillbard had wedged the post holding the Defibrillator and it was now more stable.
 - Some of the signs around the village still needed to be cleaned. Would Councillors note which these were and bring the details to the next meeting.
 - The supply of salt/grit was now in the field behind the London Inn.
 - Letters of thanks to the Apple Day helpers had been sent.
 - The advert in the Morchard Messenger about formation of a group for those with caring responsibilities had been well received with 6 people identified.

- 6. Finance.**

Cashflow table for December was circulated which explained the income and expenditure figures for November/December. Expenditure for December is £453.79 on the main account, £4,138.58 on the Reserve account and £924 on the footpaths account. Funds at the end of November before payment of these invoices stood at: Reserve Account, £13,965.37; Current Account £10,743.98; P3 Account £4,551.69.

Current Account Receipts and Invoices to be paid:

British Gas Energy	Outside lighting of the Church	£ 26.29 Direct Debit
KAL Home Improvements	Painting War Memorial posts	£375.00 BACS
Memorial Hall	PC Meetings	£ 52.50 BACS

Reserve Account

A & S Paving	Bitumen for potholes	£ 185.18 BACS
Stocksigns Ltd	Vehicle activated Speed Sign	£3,953.00 BACS

P3 (Footpaths) A/C

Johny Butt

Work to footpath

£924.00 BACS

The Current account stands at £10,290.19 after payment of these invoices, the Reserve account stands at £9,837.10 including funds for Jubilee Funds (£113.46), DAAT (£150.48), Clock Face fund (£613.99), Election Expenses (£4,000), and the P3 account stands at £3,627.69.

Les Partridge proposed, and Sarah Vere seconded that these invoices be paid and the Financial report accepted – carried unanimously.

Les Partridge also proposed that the cost of the Vehicle Activated Speed sign be taken from the Resilience Fund, David Gillbard seconded the proposal and it was carried.

7. Planning

25/01522/FULL	Erection of general purpose agricultural building	Land at NGR 275608/104882 Willowbrooke Farm, MB
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After Discussion: Les Partridge proposed that this application be SUPPORTED, David Grant seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

25/01598/MFULL	Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 15/01612/FULL (Variation of Condition (1) of planning permission 12/01303/MFUL the solar pv facility shall cease to generate electricity on or before 28 th March 2043) to allow for an extension to the cessation in the production of renewal for an indefinite period	Ellicombe Ltd Solar Farm at NGR 274160 105292 Morchard Road, Devon.
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After Discussion: Debbie Ticehurst proposed that this application be SUPPORTED, Sheila Sinclair seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

Planning: decisions / appeals / withdrawals: **None**

8. County and District Councillors' Headlines

Councillor Steve Keable's report was circulated in advance of the meeting. It contained information on the County and MDDC's Local Government Reorganisation proposals, Reshaping the future of adult social care, Streetlight trial cutting energy use, emissions and costs. Community Support and programmes. Councillor Helen Tuffin's report was circulated in advance of the meeting. It contained information on MDDC's Local Government Reorganisation proposal, which was adopted by the Council on Wednesday 26 November, the Warm Homes Grant (early registration is important), Free Christmas Car Parking in the District and the ongoing residents' survey, which closed on 8 December.

9. Correspondence not dealt with elsewhere in the meeting:

- MDDC Infrastructure Funding Statement and Infrastructure List – This document sought to break down infrastructure ambitions across Mid Devon into three categories: High Importance, Important and Desirable.
- MDDC s106 Funding Reports - the latest Section 106 (S106) funding reports were now available to view on the Mid Devon District Council website at the following link: Section 106 Funding - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK

The reports include:

- Public Open Space Project Funding Availability (by catchment area)
- Miscellaneous Infrastructure Projects (by catchment area)
- Air Quality (by catchment area)
- Affordable Housing (district wide)
- MDDC changes to Postal Votes rules and reapplying.

10. Ongoing Matters:

- a) Roads, Signage, Hedges, Potholes, Footpaths and Mud on roads, Road Wardens and Finger Posts: Les had kindly cleared the mud in the car park by the school. Dawn drew the Council's attention to the potholes in Wood Lane that would need repairing once the pot hole team were able to fix potholes in warmer

weather. Dawn would report the potholes on the DCC website. Sarah Gillbard had cleared the flood at Jane Ways Grave twice. The Clerk was asked to write to the Highways Liaison Officer to ask for the drain and gully at Jane Ways Grave to be jetted and cleared out. The Clerk would write to the Highways Liaison Officer listing the five finger posts which were missing fingers in the order of priority that the Parish Council wanted them dealt with.

- b) Accidents and Incidents: Nothing to report.
- c) Defibrillators – All checked and in working order.
- d) Emergency Plan – A date for the working group was to be agreed.
- e) Neighbourhood Watch – Stephen Leese would draft a neighbourhood plan document contents page.
- f) Christmas Tree Festival – Sarah Gilbard and Sarah Vere would decorate the Parish Council Tree. The mouse on the Parish Council tree would be named Percy (PC).

11. Crediton Area Association of Local Councils Meeting Report – The meeting had taken place on the morning of the Parish Council meeting. Unfortunately, Stephen Leese was away and no-one else had been available to attend so there was no report. – The minutes when received would be circulated to the Parish Council.

12. Morthard Bishop Music Festival - Saturday 23 May 2026. – The next planning meeting would take place on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 6.15pm.

13. Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS) – The Parish Council approved the purchase of a VAS sign. Simon and the Clerk had identified 7 locations in the village where a sign could be placed. – Those locations were approved and the Chairman agreed to forward details of those locations to the Highways Liaison Officer for approval. It was noted by the Parish Council that as the sign was to be placed adjacent to the highway that standard practice was that the sign would be owned by Devon Highways. If Devon Highways did not insure the VAS sign then the Clerk would add it to the Parish Council Insurance policy.

14. Annual Budget and Precept – First Consideration – The Clerk had circulated a budget reconciliation for the past year together with a draft budget for 2026/27 and his notes to explain the figures. The Clerk presented the draft budget for the next financial year to the Council. With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, the Council agreed that it would be worth re-joining the Devon Association of Local Councils. The Parish Council decided that they had enough information to make a final decision during the first consideration. Sarah Gillbard proposed accepting the draft budget and setting the precept for 2026/27 at £12,902, this was seconded by Les Partridge and carried unanimously.

15. Parking outside Polson Hill Garage – Photographs were circulated of the state of the green opposite Polson Hill Garage where vehicles had parked on the grass and turned it to mud with rutted tracks. This did not happen before the new operator of the garage took over and it was thought that the forecourt had too many old cars permanently parked there. The number of cars using the forecourt caused a visibility problem for those exiting the lane. It was agreed that Sarah Gillbard and Andy Hankin would visit the garage, explain the Council's position and ask that cars not be parked on the green or on the access to Sarah's fields.

16. Front page for January 2026 Morthard Messenger – Simon circulated a draft of the letter he had written to the Parish for the front page of the Morthard Messenger. The Parish Council approved it.

17. Trustees and Village Organisations Reports

- Sustainable Morthard – 22 April 2026 was “Earth Day”. Sustainable Morthard was getting involved in the School Ecology Club and the School Gardening Club. The group were pleased that the Parish Council was investing in the VAS sign.
- Memorial Hall – There had been no meeting of the Memorial Hall Committee since the last Parish Council meeting.
- Morthard Bishop Playing Fields – There were ongoing discussions with the Sports and Social Club about the Bar Licence. Anton was fixing the old barbecue. Dawn mentioned that the Football Club would like to use some of the S106 funds that were allocated to the Playing Fields to level the football pitch now that the team had been promoted to the higher divisions.
- School – Sheila mentioned that she was very worried for the future of the school. It was agreed that the Chairman would e-mail the head-teacher to voice the Council's concern.
- Churchyard – Nothing to report.
- Parochial Church Council (PCC) – The PCC had not met since the last Parish Council meeting.

18. **Items for Future Meetings** (Note – items in this section cannot be discussed – merely scheduled for a future meeting).

- Debbie Ticehurst reminded the Parish Council that First Aid qualifications from the course nearly three years ago would expire soon. **Debbie would investigate providers and costs and report back.**

Meeting Closed at 9.10pm

The next meeting of Morthard Bishop Parish Council will be on **Monday 5 January 2026** at the Memorial Hall at **7.00pm**

DRAFT