

Frithelstock Parish Council

Chair John Burrill 01805 622755

Email chair@frithelstockparish.org

Minutes of the meeting of Frithelstock Parish Council held on Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 7pm in Frithelstock Village Hall.

In attendance Cllrs. John Burrill (Chair), Chris Stevens, Lizzie Hunkin, Bob Lewis-Basson. Adrian Hardwick.

Also in attendance Devon County Council Councillor, A Saywell, Torridge District Council Councillor and six members of the public.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7pm.

2. Apologies for absence.

Cllr. Thomas sent his apology for absence due to holiday which was accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest.

None.

4. Reports from outside bodies.

Devon County Council Councillor, A Saywell gave a verbal report with a written report to follow. Now attached. He also announced that he would be standing down from Devon County Council prior the May 1st election. The Chairman thanked him for his service both to TDC and DCC and wished him well in his training to become an airline pilot.

Torridge District Council Councillor, P Pennington no report received.

No Police report received.

5. Minutes.

The minutes, previously circulated, of the meeting held on 15th January 2025 were approved and signed.

6. Matters arising.

None

7. Public Participation.

A member of the public reported on the successful litter pick on 2nd March with 17 members of the public attending.

A member of the public asked if The Parish Council would consider a making a contribution to the Business Rates payable by the The Village Hall. This will be investigated and brought back to a future meeting.

8. Appointment of a Parish Clerk

The Chair reported that no further applications had been received and that he would continue to seek assistance from neighbouring Parish Councils to try to find one.

9. Planning issues.

Three planning applications were discussed. As these were all variations to previous applications there were no objections.

10. Payments made since last meeting.

HSBC	Bank Charges	18.00
Devon CC Pensions	Past pension contributions	3.76
The Play Inspection Co Ltd	Playground Inspection	195.00

Future payments approved at this meeting.

R Lewis-Basson	Web and email hosting	103.20
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11. Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025.

The Chairman presented a draft Income and Expenditure Account for the year which was approved for publication at the Village Meeting on 16th April 2025.

12. Urgent matters raised by Councillors.

The cost of grass cutting was discussed and some reimbursement is being sought from the Cemetery and the Church. Further report at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

Date of next meeting, 7pm 21st May 2025.

John Burrill
Chair
Frithelstock Parish Council.

DCC Update Report for Frithelstock Parish Council – March 2024

Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation

As previously reported, the Government set a deadline for March 21st for interim local government reorganisation proposals to be submitted. Following meetings with Government officials, the Council has received guidance that multiple indicative proposals can be submitted.

A Special Full Council meeting was held on March 20th to discuss this matter and a huge amount of work has taken place on these indicative proposals, working with a myriad of community partners to assess the pros and cons of the following potential models:

- two unitary authorities – one covering Plymouth and another covering the rest of Devon
- a two unitary north Devon/South Devon split, with one council for Plymouth, Teignbridge, South Hams and Torbay and another for Exeter, East Devon, North Devon, Torridge, West Devon and Mid Devon
- a two unitary south west and north east split, with one council for Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon and another for Exeter, East Devon, Torbay, Teignbridge, North Devon, Torridge and Mid Devon
- a three unitary option of Plymouth, greater Exeter (formed of Exeter, East Devon and Mid Devon) and the rest of Devon
- a three unitary option, with Plymouth remaining on existing boundaries, a new unitary council formed of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge and another made up of Torbay, South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon
- Also modelled for benchmarking purposes only is the option of a single unitary authority covering the whole of Devon.

The proposals align with ministerial guidance which says that new unitary councils should have minimum populations of 500,000 people each and align with existing district council boundaries.

These proposals are **indicative** only. Within the tight deadline the Government gave us, none of the Councils in Devon have the data available or analysed properly to work out which options work or do not work.

With the County Election on the 1st of May, it's important that this document is a sound basis for the new Council to pick up the work over the coming months. The new Council will make the decision on what to submit to government on the 28th of November 2025.

The two key points I would make, whatever is finally agreed is 1. **The Unitary/Unitaries has to work for the residents of Devon.** 2. **It has to be financially sustainable.**

Other Matters

DCC Budget – The final budget was agreed by DCC Full Council in February. Despite the loss of the rural services grant, additional income from the second homes council tax has ensured we have a balanced budget and no major service reductions or cuts. There will be an additional £4m going into the Highways Budget... though had the Rural Services Grant not been taken away I think we could have found an extra £10m from the Second Homes Council Tax for Highways. Instead, this funding has had to go into other services to prevent major cutbacks within Adult Social Care or Children's Services.

Overall the net revenue budget rises to £784 million. Of which approx. £383 million is for Adult Social Care (up 8.2%) and £237 million is for Children's Services (up 5.5%). That leaves a rather more modest circa £164 million for everything else from roads to libraries...

And finally – as you may have seen, I will be standing down from the County Council in May to pursue a new career in the aviation industry as a commercial pilot. I have outlined my reasons why in the email I sent to John so won't repeat them here. However, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support over the eight years I've had the honour to represent them in local government. I will miss working with Frithelstock Parish Council, it is a lovely community to represent and, despite all of the challenges, we have got things done from getting proper police enforcement on the A388 to dragon patching and road repairs throughout the Parish.

I remain fully committed to my role until polling day on May 1st so any problems between now and then please do get in touch as I am still here to help until then!

See you around,
Andrew