

KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Kenton Victory Hall on Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillor D Blount (Chair), H Bright, R Calderwood, S Godwin & K Savill

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Connett, District Cllr Taylor, Jonathan Lasker - Ivy Education Trust (from item 7) and 1 member of the public

The meeting was opened by Cllr Blount at 7.30pm.

250709.01 Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Bryant
- Cllr Hare
- Robert Neill (Volunteer Flood Warden)

250709.02 Declarations of Interest

All members were 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.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

250709.03 Open Forum

No comments.

250709.04 Ratification of Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 June 2025. It was agreed unanimously that those minutes are signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

250709.05 Reports

5.1 Police Report and Community Speedwatch

No report.

5.2 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Connett had circulated a written report updating members about wider County 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/>

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/)

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Cllr Connett also gave a verbal update on the following:

He has asked the County Council to write to Powderham about three matters: the overgrowing vegetation on the footpath at South Town, the low-hanging branches of the three trees on the left-hand side of the Farm Shop entrance and the overhanging vegetation on the right-hand side.

The issues previously raised regarding the hedges on Witcombe Lane continue to be followed up. He emphasised that these hedges are the responsibility of the various landowners not DCC, but DCC will make an assessment about whether the hedges are so overgrown that they are impeding the highway.

With regard to the matter of the single yellow line outside the Rodean discussed at the last meeting, DCC has asked the contractors not to paint the line and at the next available opportunity it will be included in the next Teignbridge-wide order to be revoked.

He has circulated a report following recent Powderham concerts drawing together what residents have said including some of his own recommendations. His point to County is that if they make a Traffic Regulation Order then steps must be taken to ensure it is enforced. This should not be the decision of the concert promoters. He is hoping that the Parish Council will engage with Powderham on the matter. There is evidence of good Intent, but plans were not necessarily drawn together or followed through adequately.

5.3 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Taylor advised that TDC is consulting on local government reorganisation (<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.

He reported that he had accompanied Martin Wrigley, MP, to The Dolphin Inn to look at the building and discuss with the team their efforts to turn it into a community pub. They are both supportive of what is being done.

The Chair hoped that TDC would be supportive of Martin Wrigley MP's representations following the government's announcement not to go ahead at the present time, with the final stage of the repairs to the rail line between Holcombe and Teignmouth.

5.4 Volunteer Flood Warden's Report & Kenton Flood Prevention Scheme

Robert Neill sent the following update:

The various blocked gullies remain untouched by Highways but, thanks to personal intervention by Cllr Connett, we have been promised a gully sucker visit by the end of the week i.e. 11 July. This is after 7 months of constant badgering by Cllr Connett and me.

5.5 Kenton Nature and Green Spaces

Cllr Calderwood advised there was nothing new to report.

5.6 Kenton Pub and Community Group

Cllr Calderwood advised that the community has been invited to purchase shares.

There are currently 58 investors and more are needed. Another event is being planned to encourage further investment.

5.7 Action Reports

None

250709.06 Finance and Governance

6.1 Payments

Members received the invoices for payment and it was agreed unanimously that the payments as listed are approved (attached).

250709.07 Planning

7.1 New planning applications/appeals

None

7.2 Decisions

7.2.1 25/00809/CAN – Court Hall, Mamhead Road, Kenton

Single Boundary Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica f.purpurea*) overhanging Mamhead Rd and opposite Jayd Cottage - To lift the crown overhanging Road and Jayd Cottage Garden/Drive by 3m to 4m through the removal of branches at main trunks

Members noted that TDC does not object to this proposal.

7.2.2 25/00632/TPO – All Saints House, Torrington Place, Kenton

Norway Spruce – T15 - Removal of two limbs overhanging the neighbouring property

Members noted that TDC has approved this application.

7.2.3 25/00734/CAN – Land at the Triangle, Kenton

Tree works: Felling of Kanzan cherry and pruning of Golden Wych Elm

Members noted that TDC has no objections to these works in a Conservation Area.

7.2.4 25/00837/FUL & 25/00838/LBC – 12 Oxton House, Kenton

Alterations to approved fencing

Members noted that TDC has granted conditional planning consent.

7.2.5 25/00723/FUL – Kenton Village Car Park

Installation of one 50kW electric vehicle charge point in Kenton Village Car Park

Members noted that TDC has refused to grant planning consent.

250709.08 Playing Field and Hard Court

Jonathan Lasker (Ivy Education Trust) reported that the Department of Education has now approved additional capacity so that the school can operate more effectively in its temporary state until the main scheme can be delivered. Between the school and the main road boundary fence, the earth will be removed and replaced with a hall. The current administrative blocks will be removed and replaced with a double-storey building. In terms of the impact on the community whilst works take place, the school will move to Kenn for the last week of term.

Portakabin will take over the site from 21 July; the hard court will therefore be out of action for some time (beyond the summer holidays) whilst works take place. The work is due to be completed on 21 November. Whilst there will be no access to the hard court, access to the field and play equipment will continue. Ultimately, when the main scheme is delivered, the outside area will change significantly including the replacement and resiting of play equipment. With this in mind, it was agreed not to spend any money on new play equipment. It was suggested that one of the adult swings could be removed and replaced with a cradle swing. It was agreed to look at whether this was possible.

Jonathan reported that the Trust is working with Parish Lands Trust to dispose of the building; there is interest from community groups about how they may make use of it which includes some outside space.

250709.09 Car Park, Triangle, Cemetery and Other Green Spaces

The trees on the land at East Town Lane have now been surveyed. With regard to the large Hornbeam, the surveyor reported that he did not think that any remedial work or pruning was necessary at this time. Unwarranted intervention could ultimately reduce the tree's life expectancy and diminish its long-term ecological and amenity value.

The tulip tree has small-diameter pieces of deadwood present in the crown, and several low-hanging branches are extending over the footpath. His advice is that these should be crown raised to achieve a ground clearance of approximately 3 metres.

It was agreed to ask a colleague of Cllr Calderwood's, a tree surgeon, to have a look and also give his opinion. He will also carry out the work to the trees on the Triangle which has now been approved (25/00734/CAN).

The Chair reported that the yew tree in the car park looks to be struggling. Chris Britton has advised that there is a lot of leaf drop and it is yellowing, but healthy green leaf shoots are growing at the base of the tree. The tips of the branches are healthier than the base and it could be an aphid attack. He thinks it is best to leave and it should recover. In his view, it is not dangerous.

250709.11 Powderham Estate

The Chair circulated a draft letter to Powderham about the lack of action regarding points that have been raised with the Estate Office but still remain unresolved. These include overgrown vegetation affecting Brook Path, Footpath 10, South Town, Woodpecker Cottage and Mardam Court House. The letter was approved and will be sent by the clerk.

Cllr Calderwood reported that grain has now been removed from the barns at Ford Farm and in the next four weeks the Estate will remove all of their belongings, clear the hedges and tidy the borders. The barns are going to be repaired and will be used to store mechanical equipment. There will be no more grain or food sources on the site and they will eliminate any rats over the next 12 weeks.

250709.12 Defibrillator

The Chair advised that the defibrillator in the car park needs a new set of pads as the current pads are due to expire soon. The cost was approved.

250709.13 Highways

Residents are encouraged to report all potholes:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

There was a brief discussion about traffic incidents affecting the corner of the Triangle by the war memorial, but it was noted that due to a lack of DCC funding, additional signage would be unlikely. In the meantime, the Council will monitor the situation.

The Chair advised that he has reported two blocked drains, two signs covered by overgrown foliage and vehicles exiting on to Exeter Hill from Torrington Place.

250709.14 Correspondence

14.1 Members received and noted the dates of the upcoming local government reorganisation drop-in events.

250709.15 Members' items for information or general discussion, for inclusion on future agendas and/or items requiring urgent attention

[Members were reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future]

None

250709.16 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 10 September 2025 at 7.30pm.

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Chairman

9 July 2025

Item 6.1:

Expenditure

| Payment type | Payee | Details | Amount |
|----------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Standing Order | Salary (Clerk) | July | £540.88 |
| Online | Plant Tech | Grass cutting – June | £480 |
| Online | HMRC (Q1) | PAYE + Employer National Insurance contributions | £39 + £55.44 = £94.44 |
| Online | Dart Forest Trees | Tree survey (East Town Lane) | £354 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank | Bank service charges | £4.25 |

Income (7 June – 4 July 2025)

| Date received | Received from | Details | Amount |
|---------------|---------------|----------|--------|
| June | Various | Cemetery | £345 |

Bank Balance at 4 July 2025

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|------------------------|------------|
| Current account | £38,536.97 |
|------------------------|------------|