

YARNSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 25th March 2026

7.30pm, Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Brice (Chair), Ellison, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilley and Cllr Elliott (Torrige District Council/TDC), also 2 members of the public attended meeting.

26.21 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Cooke, Cllr. Farr, Cllr. Lock (TDC), Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin (Devon County Council/DCC). There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensations had been received.

26.22 Public Participation and Feedback

To members of public(owners of Twitchen Farm, 250mtrs. way from West Park see 26.28 West Park Yarnscombe Barnstaple Devon EX31 3LZ , Ref. No: 1/0039/2026/FULM. They pointed out the inadequate access to site via Huntshaw Cross or the B3227 South Molton road. Furthermore, the HGV facility is still active and according to entry in land registry would share access with proposed site. There is no infrastructure in place that would support any number of people living on site. The nearest time tabled bus stop is Alverdiscott, approx. 2 miles away and there is no pavement along road. The seven plots measure 0.5 acre each, but there is no specified limit to population density and it would not be proportionate to existing population. The nearest HGV fuel station would be at Roundswell, Barnstaple. Local schools and GP surgeries are oversubscribed. Also, the proposed site has no mains electricity or water supply. Soakaways would have to be put into made up ground. Generators would potentially be used 24 hours a day. The proposed site features a play area, so there are safety concerns for children playing next to a construction site. Parishioners pointed out that Foxdown Woods, which is bordering proposed site, is not even mentioned in planning application. These woods are not permanent, if cut down, there would be no visual barrier to site. It would also mean increased noise from machinery, people and potentially dogs. Parishioners asked for support of council in writing letter of objection to TDC planning.

Actions taken: Item will be discussed under 26.28 and clerk will send in relevant comments.

26.23 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

a) COUNTY

March has seen significant developments across Devon County Council, including children's services, rural support, infrastructure planning, public protection, and ongoing discussions on local government reform.

Children's Services and Fostering

Devon County Council continued its appeal for more foster carers this month, highlighting the need to increase local capacity for the 810 children currently in care. The Hearts and Homes Conference, held in Exeter on 20 March, offered prospective carers the opportunity to meet experienced families and understand the support available. I was so pleased to be able to attend the event. I did find it very emotional and our foster carers do such a fantastic job. Please if this is something you might be interested have a look at the website and find out more. It doesn't need to be long-term fostering, many offer fostering at weekends which is also hugely needed and valued for our children in care. [Change a young person's life and consider Fostering Devon](#) I also found out that Devon County Council are a Fostering Friendly employer and it is free for businesses to join to be able to better support foster carers who work [Fostering Friendly Employers](#)

[Scheme | The Fostering Network](#)

Cost-of-Living Support: Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF)

The national Household Support Fund will conclude at the end of March and will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF). Devon will receive £8.4 million per year (2026–2029) and this is a decrease from the previous years from the household support fund. The new fund moves away from blanket support, to provide targeted crisis payments, housing support via district councils, financial-resilience services, and community-based support. [Devon confirms plans for new crisis support fund - North Devon Today](#) As Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, I stressed that large rural counties such as Devon face hidden deprivation, higher transport and fuel costs, and increased vulnerability to inflationary pressures. Torridge households, farmers and rural businesses are particularly affected by rising prices. I continue to lobby Government for long-term, sustained rural investment to ensure that no rural household is left behind.

Local Government Reorganisation Consultation

The Government's consultation on the future structure of local government in Devon closes on 26 March 2026. Devon County Council has proposed a single Devon Unitary Council, which it argues is the most financially sustainable and least disruptive model.

[Alternative models submitted by other authorities include several options that would reorganise rural areas—such as Torridge—into new unitary arrangements. Residents are encouraged to review the proposals before the consultation closes. Consultation on local government change in Devon-News](#)

Environment, Public Health and Community Updates

DCC published multiple updates this month, including progress on nature recovery work, public health messaging around meningitis [What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself - News](#) and tick awareness, and continued enforcement activity against illegal tobacco sales.

New Livestock-Worrying Legislation and Partnership with Police

On 18 March 2026, strengthened legislation to tackle livestock worrying came into force. Devon County Council and Devon & Cornwall Police issued joint guidance urging dog owners to keep dogs on leads near livestock and to act responsibly. The new law:

- *Extends offences to include incidents on roads and public rights of way.*
- *Officially recognises alpacas and llamas as livestock.*
- *Grants police greater powers, including the ability to seize dogs, enter premises under warrant and collect forensic evidence.*

I publicly welcomed the legislation as a long-overdue step in protecting farmers and livestock, given the significant distress and financial loss such incidents cause. This is particularly important in Torridge, where public paths frequently cross grazing land and we have a lot of sheep. [New laws to protect livestock backed by council and police – News](#)

Support needed for Rural Households, farmers and Businesses

I have written to Chancellor Rachel Reeves seeking support for rural household and businesses. Not only in relation to heating oil, but LPG, red diesel, fertiliser, road fuel- all of those commodities which are seeing prices hikes due to the war in Iran and are disproportionately affecting rural areas. There are price caps on energy for all urban residents but not for us in rural areas and that's not fair- regardless of household income. As we know the chancellor has pledged money to support heating oil costs but only for those who are "eligible". [Farmers and rural communities facing 'perfect storm' as fuel costs spike - North Devon Today](#)

Domestic Abuse Support Strategy

Devon County Council approved a new four-year Domestic Abuse Support in Safe

Accommodation Strategy (2026–2030). This includes expanding refuge capacity, enhancing therapeutic support and improving access for individuals facing additional barriers. The strategy is part of Devon’s wider coordinated approach to interpersonal violence and abuse. New four-year plan agreed to strengthen domestic abuse support across Devon – News

b) DISTRICT

Regarding TDC's finances, £1,4 million need to be found in future to be able to balance budget. Litter was found by members of the public along the B3232 where ditching work had been carried out and also along road leading to Deep Moor Recycling Centre. Cllr. Elliott has contacted contractors regarding this issues. Five new recycling lorries are now in use, all of them issued with 360degree cameras, so that in future any issues (littering or otherwise) can be easily tracked.

2) Village Hall / Social Club
None.

3) Youth Club
None.

4) PCSO/Police Report
Cllr. Elliott had contacted newly qualified PCSO's to find out if/when they will attend parish council meetings or if they are able to send out a monthly crime report. He was told that they were far too busy to attend meetings and were unable to send out crime reports. Cllr. Elliott found this answer unsatisfactory and will contact Alison Hernandez.
Actions taken: Awaiting update by Cllr. Elliott.

5) Playing Field
Grass to be cut as soon as weather allows.
Actions taken: None at present.

6) Snow Warden
To be taken off agenda from next month on

26.24 Minutes of Meeting of 25th February 2026

Minutes were approved and signed off as a true record

26.25 Matters arising from last Meeting

1) Signing of electronic payment schedule and online approval of BACS payments Cllr. Pengilly had talked to bank and council was unable to find solution of setting online payment limits when making BACS payments.

Actions taken: Two councillors to sign invoices and electronic payment schedule, clerk to add payment date to schedule once payment is made.

2) Tag rugby in playing field – Clerk had received no update so far.

3) Setting up of Community Hub – Cllr. Newberry will talk to Becky Lewis (Village Hall Committee). The setting up of a community hub follows on from Yarnscombe PC's formal Emergency plan. Cllr. Newberry will apply and report back at next meeting.

Actions taken: Cllr. Newberry to liaise with Becky Lewis and apply for Community Hub pack. Item to be put on next agenda.

4) Assertion 10 update – Transparency Code guidelines had been circulated among

councillors.

Actions taken: Clerk to liaise with website administrator to ensure website fulfils criteria

26.26 New Matters

1) None.

26.27 PROW Monthly Report

Clerk had contacted Devon PROW. They confirmed that amount of £120 had not been released yet. Clerk was able to obtain Jon Boyd's (initial contact at PROW) direct line and will contact him.

Actions taken: Clerk to speak to Jon Boyd directly.

26.28 Planning

1/0039/2026/FULM

West Park Yarnscombe Barnstaple Devon EX31 3LZ.

Proposed change of use of land from a construction training centre to a show people's site consisting of 7 plots, a play area, maintenance and testing area for fair ground equipment and overnight parking. Councillors added the following comments:

Instead of "supporting vibrant economy, being able to offer newly skilled, well paid jobs that are sustainable", the proposed site would have a negative impact on existing or future tourism/leisure industry. The information provided was labelled misleading, as the creation of sustainable jobs seems at odds with application that doesn't make it clear whether site itself is permanent or temporary. It does not, as claimed in application, meet local needs, but sets a precedent. The assertion that proposed site will have no effect on neighbours is also wrong (see 26.22). Access to site is inadequate, especially taking into account the already bad overall condition of roads in the area.

There are safety concerns, as no limit to the number of people living on each of the plots is specified. Existing HGV site, showground machinery repairs, generators will all contribute to high levels of noise. District Councillor Elliott pointed out that this application may be called to committee, if so Cllr.Newberry will represent views of Yarnscombe PC.

Actions taken: Clerk to collate information and forward comments to planning department.

26.29 Additional Planning

None.

26.30 Accounts

- 1) Confirmation of dates for internal audit.
- 2) Completed internal audit forms have to be completed at next meeting on 22nd April, relevant documents to be given to internal auditor on 26th May 2026.

Meeting ended at 8:30pm