

ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in the Reading Rooms on 1 April 2025 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs Robert Owens (Chair), Ian Creese, Cliff Sumner, Nicholas Toms, Andrew Savery, John Dunlop, John Messham and Margaret Grafton

Devon County Councillor Dan Thomas
Teresa Drew (Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Parishioner(s) / Visitor(s): 9

166/2024 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies accepted from District Councillor Alison Dewynter and Cllr Denis Onley.

167/2024 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST(S) IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA

Cllr Andrew Savery declared an interest in agenda in item 10 (a) village fund grant.

168/2024 PARISH COUNCILLOR – ONE CO-OPTION VACANCY

No applications have been received.

169/2024 REPORT FROM DEVON COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAN THOMAS INCLUDING ITEMS FROM PAST MEETINGS

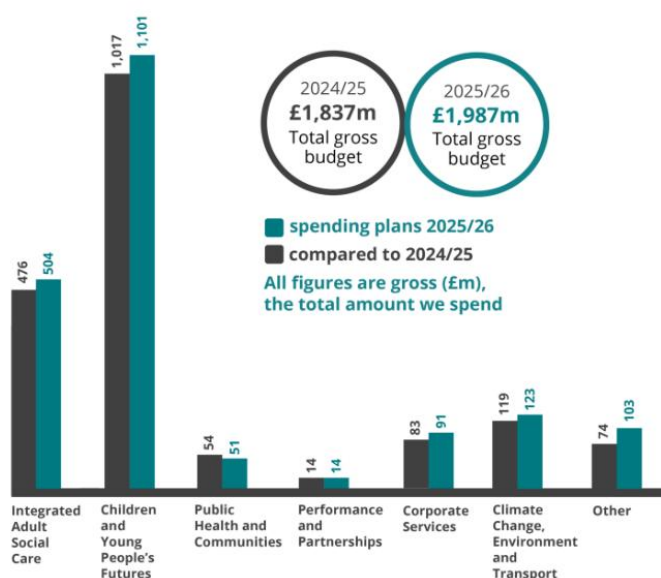
The DCC Flood Resilient Manger has agreed a meeting at Westlake, in connection with flooding.

With the election exactly a month away. I attach what I very much hope is not my final county report.

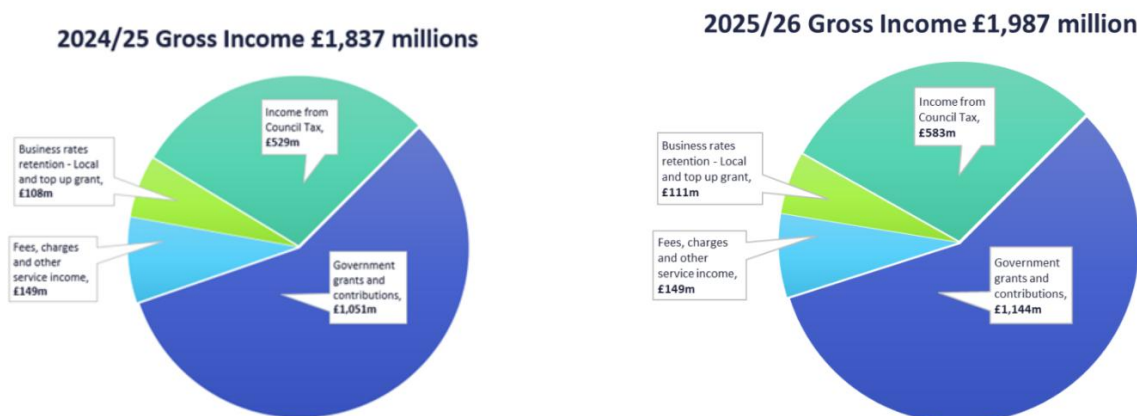
Here are the headline budget figures from County Hall, as well as the latest position on Local Government Reform:

County has agreed its budget for 2025/26 which includes the usual 2.99% rise in council tax plus the extra 2% for integrated care.

This graph, representing spending, is quite useful:



The pie charts below illustrates where the money comes from:



The annual council tax for an average Band D home will rise by £85.59 – or £1.64 a week – to £1,801.26.

Local Government Reorganisation latest:

It appears that Plymouth City Council wants to take over the 13 parishes to the west of the South Hams (currently in Rebecca Smith MP's South West Devon constituency). It makes no mention of the rest of the county.

The Districts have offered a 1:4:5 unitary solution

4 = West Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torbay.

5 = Torridge, North Devon, Mid Devon, East Devon, Exeter

1 = Plymouth

County have proposed 5 different options including the 1:4:5 as well as other options, including 2 areas – Plymouth and the rest of Devon. Torbay have also presented more than 1 option, including the 1:4:5 model but also a proposal for a Greater Torbay. Exeter City Council is lobbying for a Greater Exeter.

It is worth remembering that the 'rules' as set out were to follow the district boundaries (and therefore use District areas as the building blocks) as well as ensuring plans did not leave any of the area out. Neither Plymouth nor Exeter appear to be following these rules.

At the same time, Devon, Torbay and Torbay leaders are having discussions about establishing a mayoral strategic authority (which they ultimately hope that Cornwall will be persuaded - or compelled - to join).

1. Council Tax Second Homes Premium

Whilst SHDCs intention to charge a council tax second homes premium of 100% has been known for some time, now residents have received their council tax bills for 2025/26 the reality of paying council tax of roughly £5,000 a year for a band D property, has become apparent.

Message to residents:

There are limited circumstances where the premium is not payable, as set out in mandatory exceptions.

There is an application form available on SHDC website to apply for an exception from the premium.

SHDC cannot amend = decisions during the year to include further exceptions, however, they do have the power to offer discretionary discounts for households where they consider it appropriate. As the Council meets the full cost of discretionary discounts, they are only awarded in exceptional cases.

Any residents who believe they shouldn't pay the premium, please contact Paul Dean (paul.dean@swdevon.gov.uk). Paul and his team will deal with the enquiry and update you with the outcome.

2. Help for residents with damp and mould

Landlords of both social and private rental properties have a responsibility to make sure their properties are safe, habitable, and free from significant hazards. However, we are aware that not all damp and mould issues are being dealt with by some landlords. There are also some measures tenants can take if they have any problems.

Requested action:

- SHDC have a useful leaflet where residents can find help and information on what to do if they have damp or mould issues [download it here](#).

Messages for residents:

- There are some simple things you can do to reduce or solve damp and mould problems. Information can be found at: www.southhams.gov.uk/rental-housing-standards
- Report any disrepair to your landlord in the first instance.
- If that is not possible or you are still having problems then you can report your housing issue online at www.southhams.gov.uk/report-disrepair or complete the paper part of the leaflet and return it to the Council.
- Have the confidence to speak up and raise concerns without the fear of losing your home.

3. Staying Safe at Petting Zoos and Farms

Farm visits are fun for all the family, but farm animals carry a lot of germs that can be passed to humans.

Vulnerable groups need to take particular care as infections acquired from animals can be harmful to them: for pregnant women this also includes their unborn baby.

Advice and top tips on keeping safe can be found on the [UK Health and Security \(UKHSA\) website](#).

4. SHDC's Response to the Local Government Finance Settlement

Please find attached a copy of the Council's consultation response to the Local Government Finance Settlement.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=D&q=https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%252F%252Fcontent.govdelivery.com%252Fattachments%252FUKSWDEVON%252F2025%252F01%252F24%252Ffile_attachments%252F3141901%252FSouth%252520Hams%252520District%252520Council%252520LGF%25252025-26%252520consultation%252520response.doc/1/0101019498a49ce1-9610170b-e8b7-4c56-b8e6-07a7caaba8fd-000000/Jb_DibCZPv_8p7URG63mUb9ygeZvFFIYIktlDOkoc8o%3D389&ust=1743525360000000&usg=AOvVaw2Zq3w9-HnonySYCvdfG7p6&hl=en-GB&source=gmail

We have made the point that we strongly oppose the decision taken by ministers to cut the funding for rural authorities.

In particular, the decision to abolish the Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG) without any engagement or consultation with the affected authorities has been very disappointing.

A parishioner – asked if toilet facilities could be provided in the playing field. Cllr Toms has obtained a quote for a portable toilet for the playing fields, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

A parishioner – with the increase traffic through Westlake, particularly white van traffic. Could the following three points be considered:

- Could clear signage be placed on the "A" road indicating that is the road to Ivybridge rather than through Westlake.
- Could signage be placed at Westlake and Hollowcombe Cross stating that it is a single width road, narrow passing.
- Could 20 mph also be placed in the Westlake area.

Cllr Dan Thomas will investigate the various points but cannot pursue asking companies to change to sat navs. **ACTION: Cllr**

Thomas Cllr Dan Thomas also pointed out that some of the requested signage is the responsibility of Highways. Other signage e.g. "do not follow your sat nav" could be erected on private land with the owner's consent by private individuals. Cllr Owens suggested if such individuals did this, the Parish Council could consider a grant to re-imburse their expense of erecting such signs. Cllr Toms agreed to discuss with the landowners this possibility.

RESOLVED to place the issues on future agendas. **ACTION: Clerk**

A parishioner pointed out the road issues in Ermington have not improved. Large lorries are still coming through and there are no pathways. There is a need to encourage a nature trail at the playing field/public open space below The Spires. The parishioner enquired if Barratts had been in contact. Cllr Toms pointed out that some information has been received, but no figures in connection with funds and further information is still required. It was confirmed Barratts still own the Public Open Space (POS). Cllr Owens thanked a parishioner (a previous parish councillor) who was present for the information they had provided in connection with the public open space. Cllr Owens pointed out that if the POS was adopted by the parish council, the precept would increase and there would have to be consultation with parishioners.

Cllr Owens suggested that a suitable Speedwatch site could be established in Westlake to monitor speeding.

171/2024 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM (continued)

The parishioner pointed out there was £100,000 in the parish council bank that could be used, and it would add to the recreation facilities in the village. Cllr Sumner suggested the Ermington Environment put together a proposal which includes grants available and insurance to maintain the POS.

Cllr Owens raised the planning decision of the pet crematorium with Cllr Dan Thomas, as the parish council was disappointed it had been approved. Cllr Sumner had written to SHDC, and a formal complaint raised with them. Cllr Savery was aware of work being carried out at the unit. Cllr Sumner pointed out a license will be needed to operate. Cllr Owens stated that the parish council were disappointed at the way the planning application was handled by SHDC. Cllr Toms had observed the planning meeting when the planning application was discussed, and he felt it was not transparent and run properly. If the planning meeting had been run correctly the parish council would have no issues, but it appears the planning application has defects.

Cllr Thomas pointed out that the parish council could not object to a planning applicant they do not like, as it can only be objected to on planning grounds. The landlord (who is SHDC) has obligations to ensure what should happen actually happens. **RESOLVED** Cllr Thomas will arrange a meeting with SHDC to discuss the planning application to ensure what happens at the unit is run properly. **ACTION: Cllr Thomas**

Cllr Thomas suggested that a complaint should be made about the planning process, but not the outcome. **RESOLVED** to hold a parish council meeting on Monday 14 April 2025 to discuss a response to SHDC in connection with the planning process of the planning application.

172/2024 FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS WITH PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (PCC), SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL (SHDC) AND REBECCA SMITH MP AND THE INTERIM PLANS SUBMITTED BY PCC, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SHDC

Meetings:

DALC 30th January
South Hams DC 4th March
Plymouth CC 12th March
Rebecca Smith MP 15th March
South Hams DC 27th March
Parish Forum 3rd April
DALC 8th April

Summary:

Government launched the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024. This set out the Government's intentions to move to unitary authority structures in the remaining two-tier areas in England. This was followed by a Statutory Invitation from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution to all 21 two-tier council areas to submit proposals for a single tier of local government. In Devon, the invitation was sent to all 11 Councils – the County Council, the 8 District Councils, Torbay Council and Plymouth City Council. The Statutory Invitation included a timeline and a request for an Interim Plan by 21 March and a requirement to submit a full proposal by 28 November 2025.

There is NO mention of future of Parish Councils in the White Paper.

But letter for Jim McMahon 28th February:

This Government absolutely values the crucial role played by town and parish councils in local Government. We know people value the role of governance at the community scale. We want to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. We will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice.

My letter to Leaders in two-tier areas set out a clear criteria for proposals for unitary local government; one of them being that proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views. This should include parish and town councils in the spirit of that guidance.

Interim Plans have been submitted by the 11 Councils in Devon:

Devon County Council submitted 5 Options:

1. 2 Unitaries: Plymouth CC + All of Devon
2. 2 Unitaries: South Devon including Plymouth South Hams Teignbridge and Torbay + North Devon
3. 2 Unitaries: South West Devon including Plymouth, South Hams, and West Devon + North East Devon (this was considered by Plymouth CC as the "Housing Market Area")
4. 3 Unitaries: Plymouth + Greater Exeter + Rest of Devon
5. 3 Unitaries: Plymouth + South West Devon + North East Devon, known as the 1-4-5 plan

South Hams District Council jointly with 7 other District Council's has submitted the 1-4-5 Plan (see Devon CC option 5)

172/2024 FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS WITH PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (PCC), SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL (SHDC) AND REBECCA SMITH MP AND THE INTERIM PLANS SUBMITTED BY PCC, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SHDC (continued)

Plymouth City Council has submitted their "Local Growth Area"; which Plymouth + the "Thirteen" parishes. No mention of the rest of Devon.

Exeter District Council has submitted the "Greater Exeter" Plan (see Devon CC Option 4

Strategy:

1. We will be part of a Unitary.
2. After 28th November the Government will decide on which option for Devon; there will be a formal consultation, but this would be unlikely to change the final option.

Our best chance of influencing change is to engage with South Hams District Council, Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council with 3 requests from Ermington:

1. Bus Service
2. Road Safety and A3121 30mph speed limit
3. Shape of the ward: Ermington, Yealmpton, Holbeton (pop. 3,984) plus possibly Newton & Noss (pop. 5813) The characteristics being Rural with no urbanisation and outside the Dartmoor National Park

Cllr Toms suggested that Plymouth City Council be asked how it will be able to:

Deliver on maintaining the network of rural roads;
Manage the provision of transport for rural education;
Recycling, which requires smaller vehicles for rural roads.

Please notify Cllr Owens if there are any other suggestions.

RESOLVED Cllr Owens will represent the parish council and report back at monthly meetings. **ACTION: Cllr Owens**

173/2024 RESOLVE TO APPROVE THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF 4 MARCH 2025

RESOLVED to approve the Parish Council Meeting minutes (as previously circulated to parish councillors) of 4 March 2025.

174/2024 PLANNING

The following planning application was discussed but had not been placed on the Agenda. This meant that any decision could not be final. Deferral to the next meeting would mean that the decision would be outside the statutory time limit for response. The rules allowed the Clerk as the Proper Officer to respond under delegated authority in line with discussions at this meeting. The plans would be placed on 6 May 2025 Parish Council Meeting agenda for ratification

Reference: 0280/25/VAR

Proposal: Application for removal of condition E (occupancy) of planning consent WD/668/73

Site Address: Penquit House Farm, Penquit, PL21 0LU

Recommendations: No comments

Planning Decisions

Planning Reference: 3309/24/VAR

Decision: Refusal

Site Address: Lower Burraton Farm, Burraton, PL21 9LA

Application for removal of condition 9 (use) of planning consent 21/0430/11/F

Planning Reference: 0052/25/NAU

Decision: Prior Approval Not Required

Site Address: Fawns Farm, Ermington, PL21 0LQ

Description: Notification of proposed change of use under Class R of agricultural building to Class E (Offices)

Planning Reference: 3703/24/FUL

Decision: Conditional Approval

Site Address: Unit 8A, Ermington Workshops, Ermington, PL21 9NT

Description: Change of use from a Tech Company (Class B2) to a Pet Cremation Unit (Sui Generis)

Planning Reference: 3807/24/FUL

Decision: Conditional Approval

Site Address: Strashleigh Farm, Ivybridge, PL21 9JP

Description: Provision of stables

Cllr Toms asked that the planning department circulate plans earlier. As the recent application from Mr Bernard Spilsbury Application Number: 0970/25/PDM Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural buildings/barns to 1no. dwellinghouse (class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)) Location: Land known as The Orchard, Westlake is not giving enough time for consultation. RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the planning officer copied to Cllr Dan Thomas and Devon County Council Richard Jackson that any planning application drainage is assessed in the area.

ACTION: Clerk

175/2024 FINANCE

RESOLVED the following payments:

(i) Bank balances: -

Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Access Account bank statement as at 10 February 2025: **£26,859.33**

Lloyds Bank Treasurers Account bank statement as at 13 March 2025: **£4,567.90**

NatWest Bank Business Reserve Account as at 28 February 2025: **£70,538.75**

(ii) Receipts: - £23.53 bank interest Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Assess
£67.58 bank interest NatWest Business Reserve

(iii) Payments:- RESOLVED to make the following payments:-

Description	Gross	VAT	Net
Parish Clerk – March 2025 salary	£667.60	-	-
HMRC – Parish Clerk	£167.00	-	-
DB Computer Repairs – maintenance of parish council website March 2025	£45.00	-	-
South Hams District Council - Providing 2024/25 Payroll Service for Parish Clerk	£120.00	£20.00	£100.00
Reimbursement to Cllr Sumner – hire of The Hub for Councillor Clinic 25/01/25	£62.20	-	-
Ermington Local History Group – minutes reference 104/24 December 2024	£350.00	--	-
Ermington Store and More – hire of The Hub for parish council meeting 04/01/2025	£36.00	-	-
Reimbursement to Clerk – purchase of stamps	£125.00	-	-

(iv) RESOLVED to approve the Financial Statement and Earmarked Reserves for 2024/2025

Financial Statement

Lloyds Bank Business Account bank statement as at 10 February 2025: **£26,859.33**

Lloyds Bank Treasurers Account bank statement as at 13 March 2025: **£4,567.90**

NatWest Bank Business Reserve Account as at 28 February 2025: **£70,538.75**

Less: any unrepresented payments:-

Total Funds = £101,965.98

Earmarked Reserves

Repairs that may be required to the Reading Rooms, Ermington

-£500

A3121 - speed reduction from 40 mph to 30 mph etc.

-£10,000

Total uncommitted Funds =

£91,465.98

(v) Parish Councillors reviewed spend and income to date, against budget 2024/2025 - no issues raised.

(vi) Cllr Messham's reported no issues on verification of bank reconciliations.

(vii) RESOLVED to purchase fire extinguishers – 2 x 6 ltr foam at a cost £239.90. Cllr Savery to review service contract. **ACTION: Cllr Savery**

(viii) Grant request – Ermington Village Fund

Standing Orders stood Down at 2010 hours.

Parishioners explained what the Ermington Village Fund provide to parishioners throughout the year e.g. summer fair, firework display, hanging baskets, Easter eggs etc.

Standing Order Reinstated at 2014 hours.

RESOLVED to grant £750.00 towards the Easter Eggs and Summer Fair. **ACTION: Clerk**

Internal audit of Ermington Parish Accounts will take place on 24 April 2025 at 2.00 pm.

176/2024 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF FUTURE AGENDAS

RESOLVED to adopt Cllr Dunlop's suggestions. **ACTION: Cllr Dunlop / Clerk**

177/2024 REVIEW ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL OPERATION LONDON BRIDGE POLICY

RESOLVED to make no amendments.

178/2024 TRAVEL SURVEY = CLLR GRAFTON

The results of the survey, should be available by the end of this week. It was pleasing to note, that over 100 parishioners had completed the survey.

179/2024 ERMINGTON CRICKET CLUB PAVILLION AND TOILETS – CLLR TOMS UPDATE RE. TOILETS AT ERMINGTON PLAYING FIELD

Cllr Toms reported that Brandon Hire Station quote for one Event Toilet would be £45.00 per week with transport at £25.00 excluding VAT. This includes a weekly service and replenishing toilet rolls etc.

180/2024 REPORTS ON ALLOCATED AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

a) Ermington Parish Church liaison = Cllr Owens - The Minibeast Hunt took place last Saturday 29th March. Six children with their parents enjoyed turning over stones looking for minibeasts in the field above the Church Yard. Unfortunately, they were unable to find the slow worms that had been spotted earlier. On 3 October 2025 there will be a Barn Dance in the church

b) Community Speed Watch report = Cllr Owens -

New Site at the car park of the First and Last Bistro monitoring traffic travelling from Bunkers Hill junction towards the First and Last Bistro. Thanks to Cllr Andrew Savery for giving his permission to use this site.

Co-ordinators Conference 20th March

A reminder of roadside etiquette for volunteers.

Request to check operators who are not currently volunteering and to review sites which are not being used.

The rewording of the Speedwatch letters sent out is almost complete based on a study of how to make the most impact on speeding motorists; it will include the speed of the motorist.

The Mini Operations due to start in Cornwall in January, did not happen owing to lack of PSO's.

Wednesday 5th March 4.00pm to 5.00pm Town Hill travelling up North

Traffic Volume: 125

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 8 (7%)

Maximum speed: 28 mph

Friday 14th March 8.30am to 9.30am Church Road travelling up South West

Traffic Volume: 156

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 1 (0.7%)

Maximum speed: 25 mph

Wednesday 19th March 8.30am to 9.30am Church Road travelling North East

Traffic Volume: 126

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 4 (3%)

Maximum speed: 28 mph

Thursday 26th March 4.00pm to 5.00pm Town Hill travelling up North

Traffic Volume: 141

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 3 (2%)

Maximum speed: 28 mph

Police Officers Dave Tongate and Rob Pike were in attendance

c) Road Warden Scheme and maintenance of the speed cameras = Cllr Creese – The camera on the A3121 will be moved and placed on pole by Ermington Store and More.

d) Assessment of Parish Footpaths = Cllr Owens – nothing to report.

e) Ermington Primary School liaison = Cllr Grafton – trying to organise a meet up with the headmaster.

f) Meet Your Councillor's Clinic (25 January 2025) actions = Cllr Sumner

g) Feedback from the Ermington Environmental Group = Cllr Dunlop – no report a meeting tomorrow (2 April 2025)

181/2024 CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

Some of the correspondence listed below can be viewed on the parish website: -

National Highways: A38 near Ivybridge - overnight works for technical surveys
Devon Air Ambulance CLS - Annual Re survey - Wednesday 12th March 2025 – site inspection at Ermington
Parishioner - Planning Notification 3703/24/FUL Unit 8A, Ermington Workshops, Ermington, PL21 9NT
LGR - South Hams District Council/Plymouth City Council
Local Government Reorganisation Consultation with Town & Parish Councils
Council invests more into its own housing stock
Temporary Traffic Notice - CLENEMEADS TO CATON LODGE, Ermington (TTRO2562196)
Rebecca Smith - Invitation to an online meeting Sat 15 March at 10.45am to 12 noon
South Hams Dementia Forum at 1-3pm on Wednesday 16th April at Follaton House in Totnes
Code of Conduct Complaint
SHDC - New Tree Preservation Order Request [[RP/525201]] – emailed to the parish Tree Warden
DCC – response in connection with white lining Chapel Street
SHDC - Council celebrates its community heroes
DCC Highways - Ermington Parish Council - white lining at Chapel Street
SHDC - Council leader challenges Government on local government reorganization
SHDC - Local Government Reorganisation
South Devon National Landscape - Open Morning and Open afternoon at Butterford North Huish Sat 29th March
Email from parishioner - Successful Swift boxes installed!
DCC - Changes to Devon's Bus Services from 20th April 2025

CORMAC – Wednesday 9 April 2025 – a course for arranging grass & hedge cutting and other verge works that may impact on all users of the highway network, including pedestrians & cars

SHDC – For information only - Applicant: Mr Bernard Spilsbury Application Number: 0970/25/PDM Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural buildings/barns to 1no. dwellinghouse (class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)) Location: Land known as The Orchard, Westlake

Brandon Hire Station – One Event Toilet £45.00 per week with transport at £25.00 both plus vat. This includes a weekly service and replenishing toilet rolls etc.

182/2024 TO CONFIRM THE DATE AND TIMES OF MAY 2025 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS.

It was RESOLVED that the date of the next Annual Parish and Annual Parish Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday 6 May 2025** in Ermington Reading Rooms. The Annual Parish meeting will commence at 7.00 pm followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Ellr Nicholas Toms

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(Ermington Parish Council Chair)

Date: 6 May 2025

Agenda and minutes can be viewed on the Ermington Parish website - <http://www.ermingtonparish.com/parish-council>