

ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Ermington Reading Rooms,
on 3 February 2026 at 7.30 pm

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

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

Parishioner(s) / Visitor(s): 6

152/2025 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies accepted from District Councillor Alison Dewynter, Cllrs John Dunlop and Andrew Savery.

153/2025 PARISH COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION

RESOLVED to accept the resignation of Michael Knowles. The Chair and Parish Councillors wished to thank him for his work and help, during his time as a Councillor.

Ermington Parish Council Local Government Act 1972 Section 87(2) Casual Vacancy has been displayed by the Parish Clerk. Unless ten or more electors of Ermington Parish, on or before the 16 February 2026, submit a request in writing to the Returning Officer, South Hams District Council, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5NE for an election to be held, the Parish Council will take steps to fill the vacancy by co-option.

154/2025 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST(S) IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA

Dispensation Request for Parish Councillors in connection with agenda item 10 (vi) Grant to Ermington Store and More - RESOLVED to note Notice of Dispensation by all Parish Councillors for 12 months.

155/2025 REPORT FROM DEVON COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAN THOMAS INCLUDING ITEMS FROM PAST MEETINGS

Standing Orders stood down at 20:28 hours

Cllr Dan Thomas has walked along the section of the A3121 to come up with a plan to reduce speed.

The stretch of road at Slapton has been severely damaged during the recent storms.

The pothole near a property at the bottom of Ermington church steps, is being repaired next week.

Standing Orders reinstated at 20:40 hours.

- Email from parishioner - village to Hollowcombe cross foot link – Cllr Owens considered a paved footpath is feasible to the bus stop, but a large sum of money would be required. Cllr Toms asked Cllr Owens to consult with SHDC footpath representative. Cllr Owens pointed out that the road width could be reduced and a footpath installed if the 30-mph scheme on the A3121 was introduced. Cllr Dan Thomas explained the DCC land adjacent to the A3121 may be sold. RESOLVED Cllr Owens to email Cllr Dan Thomas and SHDC Footpath Representative with the proposals and hope there may be funding available in the future. **ACTION: Cllr Owens**

156/2025 EMAILED REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ALISON DEWYNTER INCLUDING ITEMS FROM PAST MEETINGS

Feedback on Issues Raised by the PC and Residents for action by District Councillor:

A. Funding for Toilets

The SHDC Officer responsible for grants, had a look at what is currently available to apply for. She forwarded me information on, "Small Grants for Village Halls", which I have sent on to Teresa. This is the only grant that makes specific reference to toilet provision, although it refers more to the refurbishment and upgrade of existing toilets rather than the creation of new. If EPC were able to provide more information on costs, location and planning permission, the officer felt that she might be able to help further with finding possible grant funding.

B. The Land at the Spires

The land adjacent to the Spires Estate that runs down to the river is currently owed by Barratt Homes. There is provision for this to be passed on to the Parish Council, with a quantity of money for its ongoing upkeep. Planning Rules state that it has to be managed for the benefit of nature and biodiversity in perpetuity. As the District Councillor, I am endeavouring to clarify how this process could work and hence would welcome questions from Parish Councillors and local residents that I can put to the SHDC Officer in charge of the transfer or to Barratt Homes or to Park Life SW (who have expertise in managing land in the area for the benefit of nature and biodiversity). My email address is Alison.Dewynter@swdevon.gov.uk.

News from South Hams DC of note to PC and residents:**1. Junior Park Run Planned for Filham Park**

Park Run is an inclusive and community-base initiative, inviting participation in many forms, whether that involves actually completing the event (which can be run, jogged or walked) or attending as a spectator and/or volunteer to help ensure the event can take place safely.

Junior parkrun is a free 2k event that takes place around the country every Sunday morning at 9am aimed at 4–14-year-olds.

Fundraising is underway so that a Junior Park Run can be run at Filham Park in Ivybridge as of May 2026. It is hoped that this will attract young runners from Ivybridge and the surrounding villages.

The local group are using the following Facebook page to generate interest and provide progress updates: <https://www.facebook.com/login/?next=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2F61585856470731%2F>

2. Asset Refurbishment

SHDC are in the process of carrying out a refurbishment project on many assets across the district. This includes resurfacing car parks and the refurbishment of public toilets, bins and benches.

[Click here to download an outline of the works being carried out](#)

3. Shape the Future of Devon's Libraries

Devon County Council is asking residents to help shape the future of the county's 50 libraries. It is running a consultation until Sunday 22 February 2026.

First, please read [the information about the changes being proposed](#)

Then [Have your say on Devon County Council's proposals](#) before 22 February 2026

Young people can [complete the survey for young people](#).

Printed copies of the survey are also available in all libraries and Devon County Council reception areas (County Hall in Exeter, Tav View in Barnstaple and Follaton House in Totnes).

4. Citizens Advice Winter Newsletter

The latest local Citizens Advice newsletter is linked here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaevrzhz>

5. Report Dog Fouling

Residents are encouraged to 'bag and bin' their dog waste responsibly because if left, it poses a serious health risk.

Any concerns about dog fouling should be reported via the SHDC website:

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/environment-and-nuisance/dogs/dog-fouling>

157/2025 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDING & A3121 SPEED REDUCTION PROJECT – Cllr Onley

Cllr Onley is still waiting for Cllr Dan Thomas to feedback. EPC has £10,000 available and there are various other avenues for funding, with a joined-up approach with DCC Highways and SHDC for Active Travel. This would help walkers to feel safe. Cllr Dan Thomas asked Cllr Onley to contact Cllr Alison Dewynter to have a meeting. RESOLVED Cllr Onley to liaise with Cllr Alison Dewynter. **ACTION: Cllr Onley**

158/2025 RESOLVE TO APPROVE THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the Parish Council Meeting minutes of December 2025 (as previously circulated). Cllr Owens asked for a minor amendment, which was agreed.

159/2025 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LAND BELOW “THE SPIRES”

Cllr Toms - if WATER took on the project with £50,000 from the funding, but the remainder of the money to be ring fenced in EPC bank account. Apparently, this is not possible, and Barratts wish to deal with SHDC/WATER.

160/2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR)

No update at present, awaiting the result from the various proposals to Government.

161/2025 FINANCE

RESOLVED the following:

(i) Bank balances: -

Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Access Account Bank Statement on 9 December 2025: £21,998.20

Lloyds Bank Community Account Bank Statement on 15 December 2025: £5,522.71

NatWest Bank Business Reserve Account on 31 December 2025: £71,177.64

(ii) Receipts: -

£11.56 bank interest Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Assess – November 2025

£10.48 bank interest Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Assess – December 2025

£51.79 bank interest NatWest Business Reserve – November 2025

£61.08 bank interest NatWest Business Reserve – December 2025

To make the following payments: -

Description	Gross	VAT	Net
Parish Clerk – December 2025	£820.08	-	-
Parish Clerk – January 2026	£695.18	-	-
HMRC – Parish Clerk	£195.20	-	-
HMRC – Parish Clerk	£173.80	-	-
HMRC additional HMRC Parish Clerk payment	£240.80		
David Brett – maintenance of parish council website December 2025	£50.00	-	-
David Brett – maintenance of parish council website January 2026	£50.00	-	-
DALC – Parish Councillor Training – January 2026	£318.36	£53.06	£265.30
Ermington Store and More, hire of The Hub 2 June, 1 September, 1 December 2025 – Parish Council meetings	£108.00	-	-
Ermington Store and More, hire of The Hub March 2026 EPC Parish Council meetings	£36.00	-	-
Reimbursement to Cllr Sumner who had paid Ermington Store and More, for the hire of The Hub for Parish Council Clinic, January 2026 meeting	£36.00	-	-

(iv) Financial Statement and Earmarked Reserves: -

Financial Statement		
Lloyds Bank Community Account 13 November 2025:	£7,334.63	
Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Access 9 December 2025:	£21,998.20	
NatWest Bank Business Reserve Account as at 31 December 2025:	£71,177.64	
Total Funds	£100,510.47	
		Cheque
Less: any unrepresented payments:-	-£8.75	Lloyds Payment
	-£173.80	001726
	-£50.00	001727
	-£248.40	001731
Total Funds =	£100,029.52	
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 =	£89,529.52	

161/2025 FINANCE (continued)

(v) Parish Councillors reviewed spending and income to date, against budget 2025/2026 – no issues were raised.

(vi) Grant request from Ermington Store and More for £5,000 – the grant would be used to purchase kitchen equipment to enable a wider range of food to be prepared with the objective of increasing income generated by the cafe. The current equipment is of poor quality and designed for domestic use. The plan is to replace the induction hob and replace the oven with a commercial quality product to enable food to be prepared quickly.

Standing orders stood down at 1957 hours

Cllr Messham asked if this is the extent of the needs required in the kitchen area of the Ermington Community Store and More with the equipment required. Representative from Ermington Store and More stated £5,000 would be sufficient. Cllr Toms asked if VAT was being reclaimed, and it was VAT will be reclaimed.

Cllr Onley suggested asking Cllr Dan Thomas if there are grants available to help with this project.

Cllr Owens pointed out that whilst parishioners would wish to keep the community shop, there would have to be conditions as it is public money and it must be spent diligently. The grant must also confirm to the parish council Finance Regulations.

Standing orders stood down at 2008 hours

RESOLVED to fund £5,000 to Ermington and Store and More, providing three quotes are sent to EPC and due diligence is met and there is an audit trail to ensure the money is spent on kitchen equipment. Cllr Onley requested 3 quotes, and Cllr Sumner said the parish council are discussing a grant and not a purchase so 3 quotes do not apply.

However, the Cllr Toms requested Ermington Store & More should show Due Diligence when choosing the suppliers and report back to EPC that the money had been used as per the grant request and evidence that various suppliers had been asked to quote. Any monies not used, must be returned to EPC. Clerk to move £5,000 from Lloyds Bank Comm Inst Access Account to Lloyds Bank Community Account.

162/2025 FIRST PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Cllr Onley has reported to Cllr Dan Thomas, the sewage leak on land owned by Devon County Council near Flete, which he has reported to various other authorities and also by many other parishioners. As the landowners DCC should be dealing with it. Cllr Toms suggested that WATER (Wild About The Erme River) is heavily involved with looking after the River Erme and they might be interested, in what is happening.

Parishioners wish to introduce themselves, as they are now organising the Ermington Village Fete. They will be consulting everyone who live near the areas where roads will be closed on the day of the Village Fete on 27 June 2025 and hoped that the parish council would support their application to Devon County Council for road closures.

Parishioners would like support from the Parish Council to stop unauthorised vehicles passing through the village by placing a sign at the end of the road to stop the damage to their property wall at the top on Bunkers Hill by large vehicles. RESOLVED the Clerk will email the parishioners and ask if their details could be passed to DCC Highways Officers. **ACTION: Clerk**

Parishioner asked if the large amount of money held by the Parish Council, could be accessed by a larger authority. Cllr Toms confirmed this could not be done.

Cllr Creese reported to Cllr Dan Thomas that the flooding at Westlake has hopefully been solved, with the help of a local farmer.

164/2025 PLANNING

Reference: 3701/25/FUL Site Address: Hunsdon Farm, Hunsdon, Ivybridge, PL21 9JR
Proposal: Erection of roof over existing yard
Recommendation: Support

Planning Decision

Planning Reference: 2969/25/HHO Householder Application Decision: Conditional Approval
Site Address: 5 Erme Park, Ermington, PL21 9LY
Householder application for side & rear extensions including replacement garage & provision of ancillary accommodation

Application 2113/25/HHO – 6000791 Appeal – Dismissed
Copperhayes, Road from Sunny Park to Marjery Cross, Hunsdon, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 9

Works to a TPO Tree GRANT of CONDITIONAL CONSENT

Proposal: T1: Ash tree - Reduce eastern crown spread back to perimeter fence line from 4m to 1m and reduce crown height of remaining crown to 7m above ground level, due to tree encroaching on to data centre and disrupting data signal from servers
Location: Bandvulc Remoulds Ltd, Gillard Way, Lee Mill Industrial Estate, Lee Mill, PL21 9LN

165/2025 EPC STANDING ORDERS AGAINST NALC MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2025 – Cllrs Messham and Sumner

Cllr Messham circulated information to Parish Councillors only and was thanked for his work. Cllrs Messham and Sumner to arrange a meeting to draft the EPC Standing Orders.

166/2025 CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE

RESOLVED that the Civility and Respect Pledge to be placed on the next month's agenda when all Parish Councillors are present.

Cllr Owens enquired if parish councillors could individual sign up. The Clerk has confirmed a parish councillor could personally commit to upholding these values in their daily work and interactions by signing a Councillor's Statement of Assurance.

167/2025 FUTURE OF THE READING ROOMS AND CONDITION OF THE BUILDING

Discussion ensued; it was RESOLVED to obtain quotes for a surveyor's report on the building.

168/2025 ERMINGTON PARISH MAGAZINE - Cllr Messham

There is a parishioner who will help with the publication of the magazine. A meeting to be held with those who were assisted with the magazine in the past.

169/2025 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN – Cllr Grafton

Cllr Grafton is in the process of arranging a meeting.

The last meeting took place on Monday 17th November 2025. Present were representatives of Sustainable South Hams, 2 members from Ermington Environmental, representative from Ermington Cricket Club and Ermington Village Fund, PTA member from Ermington School and Ermington Parish Council.

The aim of the project is to support communities to become better connected and more collaborative, so they can take more effective action for climate and nature. Develop action plans for climate and nature projects in our community. Explore useful resources and connect with mentors that will support us to take our first steps. Evaluate progress and receive support with the next steps. Connect with other communities taking action and learn from each other at networking

70/2025 FOUR RIVERS DEMENTIA ALLIANCE – Cllr Grafton

On Monday 9 February 2026 Cllr Grafton will be walking around the village carrying out an assessment of signage with a representative from Four Rivers Dementia Alliance.

Cllr Grafton asked if a grant of money could be ring fenced, towards the work required that may be required arising from the assessment.

171/2025 UPDATE ON ERMINGTON CRICKET CLUB PROPOSAL FOR A BUILDING ON THE PLAYING FIELD, ERMINGTON

Cllrs Toms and Grafton have attended meetings with the club and were informed that SHDC planning department are happy with the club's proposal. It is suggested that the use of the cricket club building is widened so it can be used for other activities.

RESOLVED Cllrs Toms and Grafton to liaise with the club and suggest a meeting with a planner from SHDC. **ACTION: Cllrs Toms and Grafton**

172/2025 REPORTS ON ALLOCATED AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

a) Ermington Parish Church liaison = Cllr Messham – services are curtailed to two a month recently.

b) Community Speed Watch report = Cllrs Owens and Messham –

Thursday 15 January 3.00pm to 4.00pm

Town Hill travelling up North

Traffic Volume: 96

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 3

Maximum speed: 26 mph

Thursday 22 January 3.00pm to 4.00pm

Mill Hill, on Church Road travelling North East

Traffic Volume: 153

Vehicles exceeding 24 mph: 9

Maximum speed: 30 mph

c) Road Warden Scheme, maintenance of the speed cameras and pothole team = Cllrs Savery and Creese – *an order has been placed for tubs of tarmac for potholing, to be delivered on Wednesday.*

172/2025 REPORTS ON ALLOCATED AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY (continued)

d) Assessment of Parish Footpaths = Cllr Owens - *FP11 Incline section on Fawns Farm: I have met with Alan Mighall, South Hams Ramblers, who now have a dedicated Path Maintenance Team, who could offer their labour free on most jobs relating to path upkeep. In our discussion with the owners of Fawns Farm, we agreed in principle to level the camber on the steep part of the path by affixing retaining boards to the lower posts and levelling the path whilst leaving 50cm of slope to the upper post. We estimated the length of the levelling was 46 post gaps = 115m. Also to erect a 5m boardwalk over the flooded section of the path by the gates ensuring the gates could open over it. I am contacting Jon Boyd, DCC P3 Officer, to enquire about P3 funding for the materials and hire of a digger.*

e) Meet Your Councillor's Clinic on Saturday 24th January 2026 10:00 - 13:00 actions = Cllr Grafton reported on items raised at the Councillor's Clinic which are as follows:

What can the parish council do for the youth in the village

Sports Pavilion on the playing field, to be used for all purposes e.g. parties

Should there be a community group set up to put their points to the parish council

Concerns about the leat from Keaton Weir to Fernham – damage due to fallen trees from the recent storm – reported to DCC Cllr Dan Thomas. Cllr Creese to respond to the parishioner, stating that it is outside the Parish Council powers and remit.

No bus stops in the village

Walking from the village to Hollowcombe cross is dangerous and the footpath is poor

Pathways around the playing field is in poor condition

f) Feedback from the Ermington Environmental Group = Cllr Dunlop – *no report*

g) Ermington Primary School liaison = Cllr Toms – *had passed on information about Meet Your Councillors Clinic that was held in January 2026*

173/2025 SECOND PUBLIC FORUM

No questions from the public.

174/2025 REVIEW CURRENT HIRE READING ROOM CHARGES

Hire charge per hour per room	£6.00
Hire charge for booking 4 hours or more per room	£20.00
Hire charge for the day (0800 – 1700 hours) per room	£35.00

RESOLVED not to make any changes.

175/2025 CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

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

- SHDC - Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/W/25/3367813, Land known as The Orchard, Ley Cross to Whipples Cross, Westlake, Devon PL21 9JT. Decision - The appeal is dismissed.
- Training by the Training Officer from DALC on 6 January 2026 at 6.30 pm - Code of Conduct and roles and responsibilities of councillors/the council. With the exception of Cllr Dunlop, who attended a webinar training session on the 20th of January 2026.
- Various = Temporary Traffic Notices

Nomination from the parish council to NALC who are in receipt of tickets to three Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace this year, and Devon has been allocated 6 tickets (3 pairs) for the Garden Party on Friday 8th May 2026. RESOLVED not to nominate.

Application to Name and Number New Street [RP/566717]

176/2025 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The date of the next Parish Council meeting will be held on [Tuesday 3 March 2026](#) in [The Hub](#) at [Ermington Store and More](#) at [7.30 pm](#).

177/2025 DATE, VENUE AND SPEAKER FOR ANNUAL PARISH AND ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 2026

RESOLVED to hold the meetings on [Wednesday 20 May 2026](#) in [The Hub](#) at [Ermington Store and More](#). The Annual Parish meeting will commence at 6.00 pm followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

Nicholas Toms

.....
(Ermington Parish Council Chair – Cllr Nicholas Toms)

Date: 3 March 2026

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