

Draft minutes of the Combe Martin Parish Council Meeting,
held on 13th October 2025 at 7pm at Combe Martin Community Centre.

Present: Cllrs. Seldon (Chairman), Corner, Galloway, Lethaby, Masters, Molloy, Richards, Smallridge, and Worth.

Also in attendance: Andrew Wyer (Clerk), DCC Cllr Davis, and 18 members of the public.

103/25 Trevor Kibble – The meeting started by remembering former Parish Councillor Trevor Kibble, who died recently. He had a special interest in the beach and bathing quality, and his work was the bedrock of the various schemes now in place.

104/25 Apologies – Apologies were received and **accepted** from Cllrs. Cass and Optix.

105/25 Declarations of Interest – Cllr Lethaby declared that as a District Councillor, the views he gives (and how he votes) at this meeting will not necessarily be the same as he does at a District Council meeting.

Cllr's Seldon and Worth declared an interest in planning application 80803 (Minute 111/25)

106/25 Public Participation questions (with any answers in brackets):

Have any Councillors looked into Digital ID's? Please can they sign the petition if they are against these?

Thank you to Cllr Davis for her help with public transport around the road closure.

Cllr Lethaby was going to look into a social housing query? (Cllr Lethaby had recommended they contact the social housing dept at NDC directly.)

As the Council is not currently signed up to the PPP scheme, can a member of public engage a company to help clear mulch and private vegetation cuttings from Corner Lane? (Cllr Davis – this counts as fly tipping and liable for prosecution. Cllr Lethaby will report this on the NDC fly tipping page.)

As the Council owns the Bowling Club site please can it repair damaged entrance road area? (The Bowling Club have a maintaining and repairing lease, so would be responsible for this. The Bowling Club already have this in hand.)

Where did the tractor finance come from? (The Council allocated the money from the funds set aside for running the Kiln Car Park toilets, which is likely to be unspent as the toilets have not been transferred to the Parish Council from NDC.)

107/25 Minutes – The Minutes for the Council meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025 were **approved** and signed; the minutes for the Personnel Committee held on 8th September were **noted**.

108/25 To note – The Council **noted** that staff are entitled to a personal life outside of work and that all out-of-office hours (ie evenings/weekends) communication should be (left until the next working day or) via text to their work phone number rather than a phone call. (There should be no expectation that the text will be read or replied to until the next working day.) All staff have indicated that they are fine being contacted at any time during an emergency. Councillors are also to be reminded that the staff take their instructions from the Clerk not individual Councillors. (A resolution from the Personnel Meeting)

109/25 Clerks report –The Clerk had distributed his report ahead of the meeting, so the Council **noted** the report.

110/25 County and District Councillor reports – **County Cllr Davis** had sent her report ahead of the meeting but stressed the importance of an upcoming County Council consultation on the future of Libraries!

Fighting for the Future of Our Libraries

At the October Cabinet meeting, the Administration voted to launch a 12-week consultation on the future funding and provision of library services across the county.

I urge every resident to understand the immense value we stand to lose. Our libraries, currently managed by Libraries Unlimited, are cornerstones of community life, not just book repositories.

The Indisputable Value:

The data speaks for itself. Last year alone, our 50 libraries saw 2.3 million visits and hosted over 12,000 events, drawing in 218,000 people for everything from essential 'bounce-and-rhyme' sessions for young parents to Coder Dojos and digital skill workshops. With over 113,000 active registered users, 28% of whom are children, these buildings are central to lifelong learning and early childhood development.

The Disproportionate Impact on Rural Communities:

The threat of reduced hours or closure is particularly devastating for remote rural communities like ours. For many villages, the library is the last remaining warm, safe, and free public space. It functions as a vital social lifeline, combating loneliness and providing necessary human contact, especially for the elderly and isolated residents.

Any withdrawal of council support in these areas will lead directly to severe digital exclusion. Libraries often provide the only free access to computers and broadband, allowing residents—many of whom cannot afford home internet—to apply for jobs, access critical government services, and stay connected. Transitioning to a fully volunteer-run model or 'community hub' status without robust, guaranteed funding is effectively an abrogation of responsibility by the County Council and risks cutting off our most vulnerable citizens entirely.

Action:

The upcoming consultation (**proposed to be November- January**) will explore various proposals, including revised opening hours, extending access via volunteers and technology, and the transition of some libraries into community-managed hubs with limited DCC support.

We must not let our services be downgraded. This is the moment for all residents, community groups, and parish councils to raise a powerful and unified voice. I implore you to engage fully with this consultation. We must make it impossible for the Council to ignore the essential, non-negotiable role these services play in preventing social isolation and inequality across our county.

Illegal money lending arrests in North Devon.

A man and a woman were arrested on suspicion of illegal money lending following an operation in North Devon on Wednesday September 24.

The suspects, both aged 23, were arrested at an address in Barnstaple and were taken into custody to be questioned by IMLT investigators. Two mobile phones were seized. There are up to 1.08 million people in debt to loan sharks in England, according to figures from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ).

Many illegal money lenders are well known within their communities and are often introduced to borrowers through friends or family members. They are unregulated and give loans with no paperwork, charging extortionate interest rates. They often resort to threats, intimidation and even violence if repayments are not made.

Anyone who has been affected by illegal money lending should call the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on 0300 555 2222 or access support online at www.stoploansharks.co.uk. Live Chat is available on the website from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Local Government Reorganisation in Devon

[A stronger future shaped by communities: Devon unveils 'leading' option for local government change - News](#)

I have linked the press release above. Decon County Council will submit their preferred option for Devon by the 28th December, the final decision about what that will be will be made by the Devon County Council cabinet in November.

Highway Defects

With the winter fast approaching it is more likely there will be defects in the highway network, this includes streetlights and signs.

[Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

The DCC website is very useful for reporting problems and the reports go straight to the contractor. Alternatively the highway contact number is 0345 155 1004

If it's a river flooding the environment agency can be contacted on 0345 988 1188

Please do get in touch if you think I can help with anything; Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk

Andrea

County Councillor

Combe Martin Rural Division

Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk

District Councillor Lethaby reported that the monthly report from NDC had nothing which affected Combe Martin.

111/25 NDC planning – The Council reviewed the applications below and then **resolved** to support them.

Cllr Galloway chaired the meeting while Cllr Seldon and Cllr Worth left the room ahead of 80803.

[80803](#) – Construction of 1no.dwelling and garage at La Gallerie, Victoria Street, Combe Martin, EX34 0JT

Cllr's Seldon and Worth returned and Cllr Seldon resumed Chairing for 80843

[80843](#) – Demolition of the remnants of a dilapidated dwelling and erection of a new dwelling and associated works at Land at Meadow Dean, Combers Lane, Combe Martin, Devon, EX34 0JN

Cllr Clare left

112/25 Exmoor NPA – The Council reviewed the application below and the **resolved** to support it.

[GDO 25/10](#) - Prior notification for proposed extension (36.57m x 24.38m) to agricultural building to store hay and straw from weather. Location: Verwill Lands, Lane to Holdstone Farm, Combe Martin, EX34 0PE

113/25 Planning Decisions – None.

114/25 Finance – The Council reviewed the list of invoices to be paid and then they **approved** these payments, totalling £17621.41 plus 2 late invoices (£870 relating to the new FC Lease and £2500 being the balance payment to the Firework company.)

115/25 Finance – The Council **noted** the “Receipts” and “Payments made” for September and the current Dashboard.

116/25 Finance – The Council **noted** the receipt of the 2nd half of the precept.

117/25 Finance – The Council **noted** the External Auditor Certificate.

118/25 Finance – The Council **resolved** to make a contribution of £100 to the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Lethaby declared an interest and left the room ahead of the next item.

119/25 Finance – The Council **resolved** to refund the invoice for advertising that had been paid and to cancel the outstanding invoice.

Cllr Lethaby was invited to return.

120/25 Remembrance Sunday – The Council **resolved** to ask the Clerk to represent the Council at the civic events.

121/25 Newberry Shelter – The Clerk reported that there had been some confusion about roles between the Council and the original planned donor over the management of the shelter rebuild. The Council will need to consider this to be a solely Council project. Pause any current work and puts prices together for next meeting

122/25 Code of Conduct – In line with Standing Orders 14a The Clerk declared that he has been contacted by the Monitoring Officer who is investigating two CMPC Councillors for potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.

123/25 Sexual Harassment Training – The Clerk reviewed and then **issued** all Councillors with a training handout following his recent attendance on a course.

124/25 Parking Prices – **The Council resolved to hold a meeting on Monday 27th October to review parking prices and policies for 2026/26.**

125/25 Motorcycle parking – The Council **resolved** to respond to the query by pointing out that there are already motorcycle bays in the two sea front car parks.

126/25 Blackmore Ham Gardens – The Clerk apologised to Council for reporting that the holly tree is half dead, as this is inaccurate. The Council **resolved** to replace the holly tree with an oak tree. They further resolved to plant the gardens side of the bund instead of replacing the fence.

127/25 Correspondence: The Council **noted** the correspondence:

1. Ringaride – Ilfracombe Community Transport Association Ilfracombe CTA [Document](#)
2. Notification of a Road Closure [Document](#)

128/25 Date of next meeting –

Monday 27th October 2025 at 7pm (Parking prices meeting)

Monday 10th November 2025 at 7pm (monthly Council meeting)

Monday 24th November 2025 at 7pm (Budget meeting)

The meeting closed at 20:40