

Draft minutes of the Combe Martin Parish Council Meeting,  
held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7pm at Combe Martin Community Centre.

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

Also in attendance: DCC Cllr. Davis, Andrew Wyer (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

**214/25** Apologies – Apologies were received and **accepted** from Cllrs. Corner, Masters and Optix. Cllr. Molloy apologised for missing last month's meeting as he was called away at the last moment due to a medical emergency.

**215/25** 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.

**216/25** Public Participation questions (with any answers in brackets):

Devon County Council is advertising a scheme where they fund local residents to repair potholes. Will Combe Martin Parish Council be signing up? (This is the "Road Warden" scheme where DCC train people to be safe when working on the road and then supply the tools and materials required to fill potholes. The funding and materials are channelled through the Parish/Town Council (rather than directly to the individual). CMPC are happy to support anyone who wishes to enrol in the Road Warden scheme, but individuals should note, they won't be able to fix potholes on the main road through the village, or on any "private" / non-adopted roads.)

There is dog faeces pollution being washed into the river at the Water Lane area of the river, but the pollution is being washed down from Park Lane where there are significant amounts of faeces. When it rains the pollution is being washed down Park Lane and into the river. Can CMPC put a Dog Poo bin on Park Lane? (The Council is disappointed that a minority of dog owners are not acting responsibly and picking up after their dogs. We will soon have two members of staff able to issue fines for dog related matters, hopefully this will help them act properly. In terms of putting a bin on Park Lane, there are two issues, firstly the road is privately owned and secondly, if it isn't on the collection round, NDC will object to having to the extra time and distance being added to the route.)

**217/25** Minutes – The Clerk acknowledged that Cllr Masters was shown as present and as giving her apologies. This was corrected and the Minutes for the Council meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were **approved** and signed.

**218/25** Clerks Report – The report had been distributed prior to the meeting and was **noted**.

**219/25** County Cllr & District Cllr reports – The County Cllr report had been distributed ahead of the meeting and is attached to the Minutes as Appendix A.

The District Councillor reported that there was nothing Combe Martin related happening at North Devon Council for him to pass on.

**220/25** NDC planning – **None**

**221/25** Exmoor NPA – The Council reviewed and **resolved** to support the following applications:

1. EXM/26/052/VOC - Proposed Loft Conversion to include new staircase to the rear, without complying with condition 2 (plans) of approved application 62/19/22/004. Location – Torcliff, Lester Point, Combe Martin, EX34 0DL
2. EXM/26/040/FULL - Proposed planning application to regularise the widening of 3no. Existing agricultural field gateways – 2no. Off of Coulsworthy Lane and 1no. off of Dene Lane. Retrospective. Location – Land at Coulsworthy Lane, Combe Martin, EX34 0PD

**222/25** Planning Correspondence – **None**

**223/25** Finance – The Council reviewed the list of invoices to be paid and then they **approved** these payments, totalling £40,925.89. They noted that this figure was significantly higher than usual as it included invoices for the new Community Centre boiler and the annual insurance renewal.

**224/25** Finance – The Council **noted** the “Receipts” and “Payments” for February.

**225/25** Wood Lane Update –The Clerk **reported** that he had submitted the “Biodiversity Gain Plan” and the “Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan” documents, as required as part of the planning approval. We are waiting to hear back from NDC, to see if these are approved. The orchard has been planted by Tom, with Cllrs. Molloy and Worth.

**226/25** Roof Repairs – Cllr Worth explained that he had asked a quote to repair a section of roof on Seacott as it may be contributing to the damp issues within the property. It was **resolved** to delay any decisions regarding the roof, until the effects of the recent gable end repairs were known.

**227/25** Football Club Lease – The Clerk **reported** that the Lease was virtually complete and that he was expecting an email from the Solicitors at any moment.

**228/25** Shelter on Woodlands – Cllr. Worth **reported** that he was confident that the new shelter would be done by the summer.

**229/25** Signage on Woodlands – It was **resolved** that Cllr Galloway will contact DCC Cllr Davis to see if any signage could be put up relating to people walking in the roadway.

**230/25** Beach Trading – The Council **confirmed** that the policy of not allowing any trading or advertising on the beach applied for the coming year.

**231/25** Parade Car Park – Cllr Lethaby agreed to assess the broken fence post by the entrance and to come back to Council with his recommendations.

**232/25** Newberry Band Stand – This is a duplicated item (see 228/25)

**233/25** Caravan Sales Banner – It was **resolved** that the Council will respond to the applicant suggesting that they should try and get the appropriate planning permission. Should this be forthcoming they could hardly refuse to allow it to be erected as various groups already put their banners up on the railings.

**234/25** MUGA Pitch – The Council are concerned about ensuring that Hollands Park remains open and accessible but also sympathetic to the fact the Football Club will be balancing Planning Permission deadlines with money raising efforts. It was **resolved** to invite Alex Coupland to a future meeting to ensure both parties understood the situation.

**235/25** Seacott Flat – The Council **resolved** to waive one months rent to allow the tenant to replace the damaged furniture and as a contribution to the increased electricity cost of running the dehumidifier.

**236/25** Correspondence –The Council **noted** the correspondence:

- Public Rights of Way 2024/2025 Annual Report [Annual Report](#)
- Upcoming Inspection of Local Aids to Navigation [Document](#)

**237/25** Date of next meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 8:40pm.

## Combe Martin Parish Council County Councillors report March 2026

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February the budget meeting of Devon County Council approved spending plans for 2026/27 and agreed a 4.99 per cent increase on the County Councils council tax share.

This amounts to £89.91 a year (£1.73 a week) for a Band D property for the county council's share (precept).

This would result in a council tax requirement for the authority of just over £610 million for 26/27.

To balance the position, the authority has to deliver £38.98 million of savings, alternative funding or additional income.

The budget explains how the council will continue to support local services at a time when costs are rising and demand for help is increasing.

The council will spend £839.2 million on daytoday services next year. This is £33.2 million more (4.1 per cent) than in 2025/26.

Councillors also agreed a £770.6 million capital investment programme covering the five years from 2026/27 to 2030/31.

This money will be used for major projects such as road repairs, new school places, support for children with special educational needs, and improvements to council buildings across Devon.

### **The two biggest spend areas which account for 79% of DCC's expenditure;**

#### **1. Children and families**

The Children and families budget will see the largest increase in funding across the council. Spending will rise to £268 million in 2026/27, an increase of £19.1 million. This reflects growing pressure on children's social care, early help for families, and support for children who cannot live at home.

Children and families – capital investment

A total of £76.5 million will be invested over five years in children's homes, school expansions and specialist education provision.

Over the next five years, £25.8 million will be spent on new and expanded specialist schools to create more places for children who need extra support.

#### **2. Adult social care**

Adult social care continues to be the council's biggest area of spending.

The budget for adult social care will rise to £395.9 million in 2026/27, an increase of £9.9 million, or 2.6 per cent. This helps cover rising costs, including higher wages for care staff.

#### **Roads and transport**

Spending on highways maintenance will rise to £32.4 million in 2026/27, an increase of £2 million.

Full Council also agreed an additional £4 million investment for highways maintenance over the next financial year.

#### **Public health, communities and libraries**

The council will receive £37.7 million to support public health services, including help with drug and alcohol misuse and stopsmoking services.

Spending on community services and libraries will total £14.4 million in 2026/27.

Full council also agreed additional funding of £225,000 to restore the book fund to £500,000 and an extra £425,000 to support general library delivery during transition.

Together, these total £650,000, and reverses the proposed efficiency saving within the original libraries budget resulting in a libraries budget of more than £7 million.

In addition, a £1 million reserve for Libraries and Rural Hubs will be established to support genuine transformation and community led improvement.

### **Additional funding**

The council also approved targeted funding which reflects priorities that have arisen through meetings of the council's scrutiny committees, community feedback and consultations with businesses and voluntary organisations.

These include an additional £600,000 to improve the speed in which Education Health Care Plans are delivered; £300,000 additional foster care support; £106,000 to strengthen domestic abuse provision; increase of each councillor's locality budget to £10,000.

There is also an additional £500,000 for post-16 and foster care transport.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

### **Summary**

The Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities (MHCLG) has launched a formal consultation to restructure Devon's local government. The current "two-tier" system (County and District councils) is proposed to be replaced by a Unitary model—a single-tier authority designed to be more efficient and sustainable.

As your representative, my sole priority is ensuring that any change protects the Combe Martin Rural Division. Our remote area relies on a delicate balance of agriculture, hospitality, and transport connectivity, and our voice must not be lost in this transition.

The 5 proposals in this consultation were made by the following councils on  
28 November 2025:

#### **1. Devon County Council proposed 3 unitary councils These would comprise the current areas of:**

- **Devon Unitary Council:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge and West Devon
- **Plymouth** to remain unchanged
- **Torbay** to remain unchanged

#### **2. South Hams District Council, Teignbridge Borough Council, West Devon Borough Council proposed 3 unitary councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- **Exeter and Northern Devon Unitary:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge
- **Plymouth** to remain unchanged
- **Torbay and Southern Devon Unitary:** South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay and West Devon

**3. East Devon Borough Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon Council, Torridge District Council proposed 3 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- **Exeter and Northern Devon Unitary:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, and Torridge
- **Plymouth Expanded:** parts of the parishes of Bickleigh, Brixton, Shaugh Prior and Sparkwell from the neighbouring district of South Hams
- **Torbay and Southern Devon Unitary:** South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay and West Devon

**4. Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council proposed 4 unitary councils.** This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:

- **Devon Coast and Countryside:** The rest of Devon
- **Exeter:** plus 15 parishes from within Teignbridge District Council, 28 parishes from within East Devon District Council and 6 parishes from within Mid-Devon District Council.
- **Plymouth:** plus 13 parishes from South Hams
- **Torbay:** plus 22 parishes from within Teignbridge District Council and South Hams District Council.

**5. Torbay Council proposed 4 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**

- **Exeter Council:** plus 15 parishes from within Teignbridge District Council, 28 parishes from within East Devon District Council and 6 parishes from within Mid Devon District Council
- **Plymouth Council:** plus 13 parishes from South Hams
- **Rural Devon Coast and Countryside Council:** The rest of Devon
- **Torbay Council** to remain unchanged

You can find all five proposals listed above at: [www.devonlgr.co.uk](http://www.devonlgr.co.uk).

### **Why Your Feedback is Vital- my take on this!**

Living in a remote, rural area, we face unique challenges. We must ask:

1. Will our voice be heard? Will a single large council respond to a blocked lane in Combe Martin as quickly as it would to a city street? That in reality is no different to how the current system operates. ***I will always ensure our voice is heard!***
2. Will our economy be supported? How will these models protect our seasonal hospitality and farming sectors?
3. Are the savings real? Will the £28m in savings be reinvested into rural infrastructure and transport?

How to Participate

The consultation closes at 11:59 pm on Thursday, 26 March 2026.

- Online: Submit your views via the [MHCLG Consultation Portal](#).
- Review the Cases: Detailed business cases are available at Combe Martin Library (after 13th Feb) or online at [www.devonlgr.co.uk](http://www.devonlgr.co.uk).

**Government is interested in whether each model:**

- ? Is based on sensible geographies and economic areas**
- ? Will deliver the outcomes described in the proposals**
- ? Is the right size to be efficient, improve capacity, and withstand financial shocks**
- ? Will enable stronger community engagement and support devolution**
- ? Will deliver high-quality, sustainable public services that meet local needs**

**There is a free text box under each option where you can talk about anything that matters to you. They have told us that AI will be used to analyse the results, so hopefully any strong themes will be visible to Government when they look at the output of the consultation.**

### **Corner Lane**

Works took place by the public right of way team in 2018 to put in silt traps, a debris gate at the bottom end and associated concreting with agreement from the Parish Council, residents and myself to reduce and slow the flow and associated debris coming down the lane. DCC agreed to pay the PC an annual sum to engage a contractor to keep the silt traps clean, which from what I understand hasn't been claimed or paid for a couple of years.

So all that needs to happen is for CMPC to do the works as agreed back in 2018 and claim the money as far as I can see!

**Please continue to report defects on the highway.**

With the winter now very much upon us, 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 1

Please do get in touch if you think I can help with anything; [Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk)

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