Gulworthy Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE GULWORTHY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER 2026 7.30PM HELD AT

SKITTLE ALLEY, THE COPPER PENNY INN, CHIPSHOP, TAVISTOCK

Present: Cllr K Royston (Chair), Cllr W Hamilton and Cllr G Lister

In attendance: WDBC - Cllr A Blackman and Cllr I Saxby and DCC Cllr Sellis
Mrs. L Moorse – Parish Clerk

01. Welcome and apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.32pm, welcoming everyone present, including a member of the public.

Apologies for absence were noted from Cllr K Steer, Cllr D Edwards and Cllr E Wearing.

. **02. Declarations of Interest -** No personal interests were declared in items on the agenda, nor any disclosure of pecuniary interests. .

03. Public Participation : Mr Jim Chalcraft was present as a member of the public and confirmed that he was attending to observe the meeting and did not wish to address the Council at this stage.

04. Approval of Previous Minutes
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 July 2026 were considered. The Chair requested a correction to Minute 05.04 to amend the farm name to Hele Farm.

It was noted that the West Devon Borough Councillors had not received a copy of the previous minutes before the meeting. It was agreed that minutes would in future be emailed directly to attendees as well as published on the Council website.

The minutes, subject to the correction, were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hamilton and approved as a true record.

05. Matters Arising
05.01 Broadband Provision
The Chair reported that contact with the representative from Bush Broadband had been limited during July and August, but a further update had been requested. A small working group was suggested to help progress the project and maintain the parish broadband database; members would not need to be councillors. The database indicates low uptake of conventional fibre, with approximately 12 households using Airband, while Building Digital UK (BDUK) vouchers are being pursued.

Cllr Lister reported that BT/Openreach had brought fibre along the main road towards Morwellham. Uptake remained low, with some residents continuing to use Starlink.

The Chair would update members when further information is received. Councillors to suggest potential members for a broadband working group.

05.02 Parish Council Reserves and Budget

Discussion on reserves and budgets was deferred to the dedicated finance agenda items.

05.03 Cemetery Legacy Fund and Historic Records

Members discussed the difficulty of tracing the cemetery's historic cash legacy of approximately £10,000, separate from the original land donation. The origin, date and expenditure remain unclear, and further searches of historic records, emails and meeting papers are needed. It was agreed that the Clerk continued searching for surviving financial and meeting records; with Cllr Lister to search historic emails/computer records and share any relevant documents.

05.04 Internal Audit – Outstanding Actions

The Clerk reported ongoing progress with outstanding 2025/26 internal audit actions, including draft policies, financial statements, and governance matters. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate a monthly tracker of outstanding actions and that progress would become a standing agenda item.

5.05 Bus Shelter Ownership

The Chair invited Mr. Chalcraft, who had been closely involved in establishing the bus shelter through grant funding and Devon County Council, to provide historical background. Ownership of the strip of land beneath and around the bus shelter remains unclear. Previous enquiries about Highways and Land Registry plans had not provided a conclusive answer.

Members discussed boundaries, utilities, access rights and the implications of the Council taking responsibility for the land, including maintenance, liability and insurance. It was agreed that the matter should return to the next meeting as a formal proposal covering the whole strip of land, rather than only the shelter footprint. Further enquiries are required.

05.06 Farm Cluster Initiative

There had been limited activity during the summer. Members discussed arranging a visit to Adrian Baker's renewable-energy installation and battery system, and the need for additional people to support the Vice Chair, Cllr Steer, with the initiative. Possible external support and funding routes included DALC, Devon County Council/Farmwise and sustainability-related grants. Members discussed the Sustainable Farming Incentive and uncertainty about application windows and the transition between agreements.

Members considered whether the Parish Council could contribute a modest amount towards initial facilitation or a future farm-cluster meeting. No final funding decision was recorded; it was agreed that a request for support should be placed on a future agenda. The Chair would make enquiries about SFI information and report back.

05.07 Parish/Village Hall

The Chair advised that a follow-up discussion was needed with Jim Chalctaft to bring him up to date on the previous Village Centre Meeting. A suitable date is to be arranged.

05.08 Councillor Recruitment/Co-option

The Council discussed recruiting an additional Councillor. A potential candidate remained under consideration and the Chair would follow up. The Clerk had drafted a Co-Option Policy based on examples from other councils and will circulate it in comparison with the existing Standing Orders. Members

considered that a clear public-facing policy could be helpful even if the process was already covered by Standing Orders. The Parish Council's website is still displaying a recruitment notice originally posted in 2025. It was agreed that the Clerk would review the draft Co-option Policy against the existing Standing Orders Policy 2024.

06. County and District Councillor Reports: DCC Cllr D Sellis, WDBC Cllrs A Blackman and I Saxby
The County and District Councillors each presented their reports, covering a range of local and wider issues affecting the parish. The following summarises the main points raised, including local government reorganisation, funding opportunities, highways and road safety, and environmental concerns relating to the River Tamar. Matters requiring further investigation or follow-up are noted below.

- **Local Government and Funding:** Members were updated on the delayed local government re-organisation review and advised that the May 2027 West Devon Borough Council elections were expected to proceed under the existing arrangements. Councillors were encouraged to identify listed or heritage buildings at risk and report heritage crime to the police. Funding opportunities highlighted included the Growing Communities Fund, grants supporting young people and wellbeing, the West Devon Community Halls Capital Grant when it reopens, and the Crisis and Resilience Fund for eligible residents.

- **Highways and Road Safety:** Concerns were raised which included traffic speeds and road safety around the school and church hall, local junctions and the village roundabout. Meetings had taken place with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer, and the Police Sergeant was reviewing traffic-calming options outside the school and church hall. Road maintenance; drainage and winter grit supplies and storage, and a possible grit bin at Mill Hill were also raised. Residents were encouraged to report road defects, drainage problems, overgrown hedges and damaged signs through Devon County Council's online reporting system, providing photographs where possible

- **River Tamar and environmental concerns:** Members discussed fallen trees and debris in the River Tamar, concerns about water quality and uncertainty over responsibility for river clearance. It was suggested that the Council contact the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF) to clarify responsibility for these matters.

- **Other local concerns:** The Chair agreed to follow up with West Devon Borough Council regarding the Tamar Trail Centre and to speak further with a resident who had reported problems involving quarry lorries.

07. Parish Councillor Reports
Cemetery maintenance was reported as generally satisfactory, although some grass was long and several trees required inspection or maintenance. Members agreed that further councillors should inspect the trees before deciding what work was needed. The progress of grave plotting and the condition of the cemetery hedge were also discussed.

The Council discussed roadside vegetation and visibility, and members were advised to report overgrown hedges and defective or obscured signs to Highways. A possible wildflower meadow in the cemetery was raised for further consideration; no decision was made.

Concerns regarding debris in the River Tamar, previously raised under the District Councillors' reports (Minute 06 refers) were reiterated by Cllr Lister as large, submerged trees, fallen branches, and debris blocking the River Tamar has created serious navigation hazards for heritage vessels and caused commercial operators to withdraw services due to damage risks. It was agreed that the Council would write formally to

the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF) and/or the Admiralty to establish responsibility and seek clearance. Also mentioned that there was surface scum and concerns regarding possible sewage-related pollution near Calstock.

08. Planning:

08.01 Planning Application received:

Reference: 2415/26/LBC Morwell House, Morwell PL19 8JH

Works to repair and recover the roof of the southeast wing, repairs to chimneys and overhaul of rainwater goods. Comments required by 8th October 2026.

The Chair reviewed the design, access statements, and supporting documents, noting it is substantially similar to previous approved works on the opposite wing. Appropriate protection for historic structures and lofts will be in place during dry weather. The Council formally resolved to support the application.

08.02 To consider any planning applications received after the publication of this agenda, if any.

None considered.

08.03 To note planning decisions made since the last meeting.: Noted

08.04 Other planning matters, including appeals and enforcement issues.

A major proposal for approximately 120 new homes on Callington Road was briefly discussed.

09. Finance

09.01 Payments Schedule- The payments schedule—including staff salaries for July and August and associated tax payments—was introduced. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Hamilton and approved unanimously.

09.02 Receipts **–** Parish and cemetery receipts, interest, and wayleaves were noted.

09.03 Account Balances and Bank Reconciliation **–** for the period to 31st August 2026 were reviewed, with bank statements initialled and documents signed.

09.04 Budget update

The Clerk presented a revised, clearer two-page budget format separating staff costs, grounds maintenance, and earmarked reserves which were duly accepted.

The Members discussed apportioning an appropriate share of the Clerk's administration costs to the cemetery account. The Clerk agreed to keep a diary record of time spent on cemetery administration to establish a transparent basis for future apportionment.

10. Cemetery Update –

10.01 Mole activity.

The Clerk reported that contractor Derek Ross had recently inspected the cemetery and would return to review the grounds and mole activity following a delay caused by an interment. Tree maintenance requirements, including low-hanging branches and a leaning tree, were also noted for further inspection by councillors.

10.02 Enquiries – Memorial Benches and Planting

Two memorial bench proposals were discussed. Further clarification and a plan showing the proposed location of one bench were requested before final approval. A request for additional planting near the bench

was not supported due to concerns regarding maintenance and setting a precedent. The Clerk to liaise with the family regarding the proposed bench location and planting request.

10.03 Cemetery Plan and Records

Progress with cemetery grave-plotting and historical records was discussed. The distinction between the original gift of land and a subsequent financial legacy was considered, although the full details of the legacy and its expenditure remain to be established.

The Clerk is reviewing cemetery application forms, price lists and terms and conditions to ensure that memorial requirements and headstone safety provisions are adequately covered.

Historical financial records relating to the cemetery legacy, including an earlier spreadsheet prepared by the previous Parish Clerk, are being traced to clarify the outstanding balance and associated expenditure.

10.04 Cemetery and village signage. The proposal for village and cemetery warning signs, potentially involving a school design competition, was carried forward to the next meeting.

11. Highways

Winter preparations were discussed, including clarification of the procedure for ordering road grit for the grit bins. The Parish Clerk was asked to ascertain the ordering procedure. Existing grit bin locations (including Mill Hill) were also discussed, together with snow warden responsibilities and arrangements for communicating directly with residents.

General road maintenance across the local lanes was discussed, including drainage and the reporting of overgrown hedges through the Devon County Council (DCC) online reporting portal.

12. Any Other Business

The Chair raised the possibility of developing a wildflower meadow in the cemetery, including attending relevant events or seeking advice from specialist organisations. This remained an idea for further consideration.

The Chair also undertook to follow up on the Tamar Trail Centre, and also to contact a local resident who had raised concerns about quarry-lorry activity and damage to trees.

13. Items for Next Meeting and Councillor Availability

The following matters were identified for inclusion on the next Parish Council's Meeting agenda:

- Broadband project and working group setup
- Bus shelter land ownership and registration proposal
- Farm cluster initiative and funding support
- Parish and village hall management update
- Councillor co-option policy review
- Cemetery legacy financial records, application forms, and memorial regulations
- Village and cemetery signage / school brief
- Winter grit arrangements

14. Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday 9 November 2026 at 7.30 pm at The Copper Penny Inn (Skittle Alley), Chipshop, Tavistock.

The date has been changed from 2nd November to 9th November 2026 due to room availability.

Signed: **Date:**