

AYLESBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Aylesbeare Parish Council held in The Village Hall, Village Way on **Wednesday 6th May 2026** at 7pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Mark Branson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Debbie Banks *[from 7.31pm]*
Cllr Jacky Owen

ABSENT

Cllr Tracie Cooke
Cllr Anna Thompson
Cllr Nick Warren

IN ATTENDANCE: Four members of the public, Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)
D/Cllr Jess Bailey *[from 7:20pm]*

Annual Parish Meeting

1 Reports

1.1 Report from Infinis about the progress of the Ford Oaks Solar Park

Cllr Branson invited the Head of Development & his colleague from Infinis to give an update on the project.

Infinis aim to generate electricity for 30-40 years from solar panels. The company is just about 20 years old and has enjoyed support from Governments of both parties in that time.

A member of the public asked about connection to the National Grid. NG is divided into transmission and distribution. For this project the request to connect may well date back 5 years. It always depends on the cabling available. FOSP will connect to the 132kv network. The existing grid is the main thing that is holding back the connection of renewables as it was designed to deliver power from a few central large power stations

FOSP has reached the piling stage which is 70% complete so the noise will abate in about a month's time. Frames and panels will be installed after this through to the end of the year.

It has been challenging with the level of rainfall over the winter.

The public were aware that the transport arrangements had significantly improved since the early days but asked how will Quarter Mile Lane be left afterwards.

Prior to the start the condition of the Lane was assessed with Devon Highways and it will be returned to that condition after the project. There have been a lot of scouring with the high levels of rainfall.

The final finish date of construction is March 2027 with the mechanical phase completed by October, followed by commissioning and testing.

The volume deliveries of aggregates are virtually completed, and the project will reuse material from temporary compounds. A 5- week period of bulk deliveries of panels carefully planned to not affect holiday traffic.

A member of the public asked if Infinis were aware of any further solar plans in the area. Infinis had met Planning Officers that day and only 2 solar projects are expected in the entire EDDC area. It is suspected the national grid access is a key issue.

The options for brownfield solar were discussed and the issues of the size of possible solar farms were discussed. The materials are getting cheaper and this could well make smaller sites, eg supermarket car parks, economically viable.

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| Chair Initials |
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Infinis confirmed the Community Benefit fund of £93,000 split between 3 Parish Councils. with applications for funding soon to be invited by a separate organisation. The missing Boundary marker was raised and Infinis reported that they believe they had found it. Before commencement an archaeological assessment was done, but non-designated heritage items are not considered of importance for scheduling. The final question was why a big gap between the fence and the hedge. Infinis advised that a 5 metre gap was standard.

The Chairman thanked the Infinis team for their time and the useful information that had been shared. [2 members of the public left at 7:46pm]

1.2 Report from the Police

Please send my apologies to the annual meeting this weds. Overall Crime and Anti-social behaviour are very low within the village and there is nothing extra I need to raise. Your team is currently headed by Inspector Matt Helm and below him is Sergeant James Dalley.

Constables wise we have three based at Ottery along with me as your PCSO. We are currently going through a recruitment process for PCSO`s and I am pleased to say there will be an additional PCSO joining us at Ottery from June this year. For keeping up to date with the comings and goings of the patch please follow us on Facebook under Ottery Police, should you not have access to Facebook then you can find our pages within the force website by inputting your postcode. Wishing all the community a safe spring and summer and should anyone wish to contact me direct my email is 30384@dc.police.uk

1.3 Report from Keep Britain Tidy

Another year, another great British spring clean campaign! A few people wrote on the buzz about it and where they picked up rubbish. Then Topics printed the poster in February and March and we did get posters put up on the buzz and around the village inc the church. We hope it's helped in a small way to keep our village lanes and roads beautiful and rubbish free.

2 Review of the year from the Chair

The Chair gave a brief report on the Parish Council's year covering the following:

Noticeboards The Council was pleased to have found a contractor and been able to install the new noticeboards funded with a generous donation from Cllr Jess Bailey's Locality Budget. Thanks Jess, they are a very practical and very welcome improvement.

Website In line with Government instructions the Council has a new website shortly to be unveiled with a .gov.uk suffix guaranteeing improved security, full accessibility and compliant features. The clerk and Cllrs will have new emails, but the Council will overlap the two systems for a year to ensure nothing is missed.

Planning It has been a busy 12 months with some quite contentious planning applications and a few planning enforcement issues as well. The Council welcomed the residents who had taken the time to make their views known by coming along to Council meetings. Rarely do planning decisions provide a completely satisfactory result for all but the Council will continue to represent the Parish's views loudly and clearly to the Local Planning Authority at EDDC.

Highways With the significant rainfall in January and February all roads in the area took a significant hammering with ours having to cope with the significantly increased traffic generated by FOSP. The Council has raised issues with DCC Highways and SWW to get to the bottom of why areas were flooded and will continue to do so. TH Chair urged all residents to report all problems with Highways to Devon County Council

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Chair Initials

via their Report-a-Problem webpage, if possible with photographs of the problem. This can be done in moments if using a smartphone.

Positive Finances After careful budgeting the Council has managed to restore a decent working reserve putting the finances on a healthy footing. The unexpected Community Infrastructure Levy funds of over £10,000 and the likelihood of further funds from the Ford Oaks Solar Park bodes well for improvements to the Rec and Play Area.

3 Questions from the public

A speaker asked about the salt bin at Rosamondford. The Chair advised that this was a good example of an issue that should be reported first using the DCC Report a Problem webpage.

The Council’s Roadwarden reported that DCC wanted him to go on a Chapter 8 2-day course. He’d rather not but he has been told he has to. On behalf of the Council and the community Chair thanked him very much for his efforts that were greatly appreciated.

The problem of a van parked outside the pub at the junction of Withen Lane and Village Way caused significant lack of visibility for vehicles emerging from Withen Lane, even in big tractors. Council noted that it is illegally parked. This will be discussed in the agenda later.

Annual Council Meeting

1 Election of Chair

Council **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Anna Thompson as Chair. Council was sorry to hear that Jacky Owen is moving out of the village and will no longer be a Cllr. She will be missed and Council thanked her for her significant contribution over several years. We all hope that she will be very happy in her new home.

2 Apologies

Council **RESOLVED** to accept apologies from Cllr Thompson who is working and Cllrs Cooke & Owen who are away. *[One member of the public left at 8pm]*

3 Declarations of Interest

None.

4 Open Public Forum

A speaker asked about the Community Fund which they understood to have about £7-800 left over from the defunct youth club. The clerk advised that these funds had been reallocated to the Play Area refurbishment in 2022-23 when the Council needed to find as much funding as possible to maximise the improvements that could be made.

5 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the meeting minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2026 and the Chair duly signed them.

6 Report of the District & County Councillor

County & District Cllr Jess Bailey reported the following: Libraries hours are to be cut despite 25k responses to the consultation and an inadequate report submitted to the Scrutiny Committee. This may go to the full Cabinet for further discussion.

The Local Government Review rumbles on with the Government’s decision now expected in July instead of June. C&D/Cllr Bailey expects that the Government will prefer the Exeter & Plymouth expansion bids. There is a controversial planning application for 140 homes on the Sidmouth Rd in Ottery St Mary to which she has objected.

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The Local Plan meeting was yesterday and Government transition arrangements allow for a slightly reduced housing target which EDDC hopes to make use of. C&D/Cllr Bailey’s Locality Budget is about to be reopened and she welcomed bids from the Parish Council or Community Groups for small grants locally.

7 Village Matters

7.1 Scotchmead Parking

Council was concerned that local residents and the mower couldn’t access the play area. Clerk to forward the email to C&D/Cllr Bailey

7.2 Community Infrastructure Levy Receipts – Play Area

The search for quotes continues with Sovereign Play a possible supplier.

7.3 Bramblemead Health concerns

Concern has been expressed about the materials and fluids on the drive of a Bramblemead house that have been there for a prolonged period as well as the deteriorating vehicles. Cllr Branson will pass on the details of the Housing Company for the clerk to make them aware of the concerns.

7.4 Road Markings (White Lines)

Chair was pleased to report that the white lines have been renewed. Council hopes that the ‘SLOW’ sign on the road will also be renewed but contractors advise that these will be done on a separate occasion.

7.5 The Nightjar

Council needs to tread carefully before registering the pub as a Community Asset given that it is advertised on a business site. Villa Verde are opening another branch in Okehampton. Reassurance has been received from the owner that he is in business to keep British pubs alive.

7.6 SWW Improved Water Treatment Works - April 2026 Figures

Rainfall Aylesbeare STW overflows. So far nearly another month without an overflow but then again hardly any rain.

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| Total | | 18.9 | 0.74 |
| | Overflow Duration Hrs | Rainfall.mm | Rainfall Inches |

Monitoring continues.

8 Planning Applications

8.1 26/0647/FUL Crossways Cottage, Village Way Replacement rear veranda
Council **RESOLVED** to support this application.

8.2 26/0652/FUL Rosamondford Farm Amended plans
Council understands the original application would have required Odour and Noise surveys costing £10k hence the reduction in size.

9 Council Administration

9.1 Election of Vice-Chair and Allocation of Roles incl. VH Trustees & Airport CC
Council **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Mark Branson as Vice Chair
With Cllr Owen sadly leaving the village there will be one vacant ex-officio VH Trustee and no Airport Consultative Committee rep. Chair will seek a local volunteer

9.2 Councillor Details Registers of Interests, Declarations & Emails
Cllrs reported no changes to Declarations of Interests and confirmed that they were content with the contact information as submitted.

9.3 Financial Authorisation

9.3.1 Council **RESOLVED** to continue to bank with NatWest and all Councillors are cheque signatories.

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9.3.2 Council **RESOLVED** to keep the purchase threshold for 3 quotes at £2,500 as agreed at the meeting in June 2025 (minute ref 2025-06 para 10.2)

9.3.3 Council **NOTED** that the clerk has to pay the Pension Fund contributions in advance of Council meetings and then be reimbursed. This is because the pension provider is required by their regulator to receive all payments by the 7th of the month following the month in which the pay is earned. As Aylesbeare Parish Council's payments are made by cheque this was rarely achieved until the clerk arranged to pay the full amount due to the Pension Fund from his own funds and claim reimbursement at the appropriate meeting.

10 Dates and Times of Meetings

Council **RESOLVED** to continue meeting on the first Wednesday of the month (except January) so the next year's meetings will be held on

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| Wednesday 3 rd June 2026 | Wednesday 13 th January 2027 |
| Wednesday 8 th July 2026 | Wednesday 3 rd February 2027 |
| Wednesday 9 th September 2026 | Wednesday 3 rd March 2027 |
| Wednesday 14 th October 2026 | Wednesday 7 th April 2027 |
| Wednesday 4 th November | Wednesday 5 th May 2027 |
| Wednesday 2 nd December 2026 | |

11 Finance

11.1 Current balances

Council **NOTED** the current balance of **£ 46,832.37**

11.2 Payments

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

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| 11.2.1 Devon Assoc. of Local Councils Annual subscription | £ | 247.30 |
| 11.2.2 Shane Martin Fencing Noticeboards installation (Inv 2 nd Apr) | £ | 540.00 |
| 11.2.3 J P Roberts - clerk pay, (April) | £ 305.87 | |
| Reimbursements: Pension payment for April | £ 99.03 | |
| VH Internet Jurassic (Cuckoo) Fibre | £ 20.00 | £ 424.50 |
| 11.2.3 HMRC (clerk's PAYE Income Tax for April) | £ | 73.20 |

12 Next Meeting - Wednesday 3rd June 2026

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting closed at 8:47pm

Signed Date
Cllr A C Thompson, Chair