AYLESBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Aylesbeare Parish Council held in The Foxwell Room, The Village Hall, Aylesbeare on **Wednesday 14th October 2026** at 7:15pm.

PRESENT	**ABSENT**
Cllr Anna Thompson	Cllr Debbie Banks
Cllr Mark Branson (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Sam Slade
Cllr Nick Warren	

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Chair Welcome

Cllr Anna Thompson (Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and gave the following report:
It's been a relatively calm month as we slide into autumn, and the trees begin to turn. As always, falling leaves, twigs and branches cause blocked gullies and drains. We have some marvellous local people who go above and beyond collecting litter, clearing verges and generally tidying up, but it would be great if everyone could take responsibility for the boundaries of their property, large or small.
Preparations for winter include making sure the grit bins around the village are full. This grit is provided by the County Council for use on our roads, not on private paths, driveways or unadopted roads. There is an online reporting tool where you can request top-ups for the bins, using the code which can be found inside the bin.
https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/map/map_src/gritbins/
The Parish Council will be taking part once again in the Christmas Winter Wonderland at St Mary's Church, which this year is a Little Christmas Tree Festival. This opens on the 12th December and runs through until the New Year.
In July the Government announced that 14 areas will be subject to Local Government Reorganisation, including Devon. This has subsequently been paused, not cancelled, and we are still awaiting an update. Local elections will all be held as planned next year.
One of our agenda items relates to Ford Oaks solar park where we will be updating council on the application for community funds from the project. We have supplied contact details for the church and village hall and still await further news. We have also asked James Blanchard at Infinis to ensure that efforts are made to search for the ancient way markers in Quarter Mile Lane as they relocate their compound this month, which will hopefully result in fewer heavy lorries along Marwood Road.
We still have a vacancy for a further councillor and welcome willing volunteers. Please feel free to have an informal chat with any of us.
Most of you will already be aware that Ann Emmett's funeral takes place this week and we are thinking of her friends and family.
Finally the Parish Council wants to welcome Char and Jack Alden to the village as the new managers of the Nightjar which opens this Friday, and to wish them well.

2 Apologies

Cllr Banks could not attend as she is working and Cllr Slade is away. Council **RESOLVED** to accept the reasons given.

3 Declarations of Interest

None.

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Chair Initials

4 Open Public Forum

The first speaker advised that he had defended the Council against accusations of not acting assertively enough on the Scotchmead water leak and he thanked the Council for pressing this issue.
He reported that outside 1 Oakmead there is a similar leak that constantly flows into the drain. Cllr Warren has reported this leak and had been told that the leak was on private land and the responsibility of the property owner.
He further asked if the field below the football pitch could be used to enhance the village biodiversity (grants are available) eg as a Community Orchard as there wasn't much biodiversity. Devon Community Foundation could be a source of funding.
[One member of the public left the meeting at 7:31pm]

5 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED t**o approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2026 and the Chair duly signed them.

6 Report of the District & County Councillor

County & District Cllr Jess Bailey could not attend the meeting due to another meeting she had to attend.

7 Parish Matters

7.1 The Nightjar

Cllr Branson had visited the new tenants and reported that there was a good range of beers and ciders being installed and the menu will have deals for the local community.as well as special menus. They would welcome ideas for events.

7.2 Highways

Council is unclear if the van on Village Way has resumed parking near the junction with Village Way restricting the visibility.

7.3 Standpipes

Council **NOTED** that Devon's reservoirs were about 18% full and drought measures to save water are in place. If rainfall does not improve the next action would be to introduce standpipes

7.4 Grit Bins

Council will apply for another grit bin near Brooklea. Chair emailed Highways to ask for this bin.

7.5 SWW Improved Water Treatment Works

Council assumes the works have finished as there is no evidence of activity or spillage at the Treatment Works .
Cllr Warren supplied the following figures:

	Overflow Duration (Hrs)	Rainfall mm	inches
August	0	33.9	1.33
September	0	47.03	1.85

Council continues to monitor the rainfall and overflows.

7.6 Water Leak in Village Way & SWW Planned Works

SWW will connect the Barton Farm properties in January.

7.7 Internal Auditor Appointment

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Mrs P Clapham B Sc(Hons) as the Internal Auditor for 2026-27.

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Chair Initials

7.8 Parking in Scotchmead (incl car park surface, abandoned vehicles, caravan)
Council will continue to monitor the car park and hopes that it can relieve the pressure on parking in Scotchmead. The car park will be reassessed when the clocks go back.
7.9 Village Hall drain cover
Clerk will chase with StreetScene as the repair has not been completed.
8 Ford Oaks Solar Park
Council **RESOLVED** to formally approve the Community Engagement Fund allocation (see appendix A) whereby 3 community groups (the Parish Council, Village Hall and St Mary's Church) will share the fund. Each party will submit their own bids for equal shares (⅓) of the funds available.
The Chair reported the following information from Infinis after her conversation with them:

> I've been chasing up the points we discussed and just wanted to let you know where I'm up to so you can report back to your fellow councillors at this evening's meeting.
> *I've checked with Matt at Grantscape and he has everything he needs so, assuming the policy is adopted tonight, you'll be all set to start making some grants with the community fund.
> *I've spoken to the site manager about HGVs moving off our agreed Transport Management Plan, he's going to speak to our haulage contractor and remind them what they need to do. He did say that there are other developments in the area though, and they will have their own plans. If you can ask people to take registration numbers, alongside times and dates, we'll look into any report though. We do remove drivers from our projects if they keep floating our plans, so please understand that we do take it seriously. Most of our HGV deliveries have ended, but we will have a couple of deliveries of transformers for the substation to be built off Withybed Lane. These will be big and slow, but grouped together to minimise disruption. I'll let you and Jim know how we plan to do that when I have the details.
> *I've driven and walked the area today, and agree that the position of the sign on Marwood Lane obscures sight to the left for drivers coming out of Quatermile Lane. The site manager is going to look at this and see if it can be better positioned (any change might need to be agreed by East Devon DC, if so I'll let you know as sometimes district councils move a bit quicker if their parishes ask for something.) I spoke to the waterworks people digging up in Aylesbeare too (I think they might have been new on site today), and he's also going to check that their signs and ours aren't confusing each other (the waterworks workers said they could be with you for a week).
> *We're waiting on Devon County Council to sign off on some repairs to Withybed Lane and the junction with Quarter Mile Lane, I'll let you know when we receive this and can schedule the works in. I also noticed some recent patching on one of the bends in Quarter Mile Lane near Aylesbeare, which I'm told we did.
> *We think we know where the old stone markers on the bend in Withybed Lane are, I'm waiting for some photos and details, and will email them on to Jim when I get them.
> *The entrance on Withybed Lane will have its hedgerow restored right at the end of our works. It needs a specialist contractor to do it, so we want to be sure that it only needs to be done once.
> I think that's everything we discussed last night, but if I've missed anything or new concerns come up at this evening's meeting please do let me know.

9 Planning & Consultations
9.1 Planning Decisions
9.1.1 No notifications this month. Council was disappointed to see that Cherry Trees will be allowed to build 2 houses next to their property beyond the property line and overlooking neighbouring properties. Council feels that the local community's views have been completely ignored and there seems to be little point in having

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Chair Initials

a planning process if unacceptable development like this can be approved.

9.2 Planning Applications

9.2.1 None Received

9.3 Consultations

9.3.1 Devon & Somerset Fire Service Community Risk Management Plan 27-32

Councillors will review this plan and raise any urgent issues.

10 Finance

10.1 Current balances

Council **NOTED** the current balance of **£ 41,389.97** (at 1st Oct 2026).

10.2 Quarter 2 2026-27 Budget Review

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Budget Review as presented (see appendix B).

10.3 Payments

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

10.3.1 Clear Councils Insurance Annual premium			**£ 949.24**
10.3.2 J P Roberts - clerk pay for June & Sept	£	804.09	
Reimbursements: VH Cuckoo Fibre	£	20.00	
Pension payment	£	73.00	**£ 897.19**
10.3.3 HMRC - clerk's PAYE for June			**£ 86.80**
10.3.4 PKF Littlejohn LLP External Auditor fee			**£ 348.00**

10.4 AGAR 2025-26

Council NOTED the External Auditor's Limited Assurance Review (see appendix cccccc) and draws the Parish's attention to the Notice of Conclusion of Audit (see appendix DDDDDD)

11 Next Meetings

The next three meetings will be held on:
Weds 4th November
Weds 2nd December
Weds 13th January 2027

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting closed at 8:45pm

Signed …… Date ……
Cllr A C Thompson, Chair

Appendix A Community Engagement Fund Allocation

Community Benefit Fund from Ford Oaks Solar Park

Dear all

You'll recall that in September 2025 we met with Infinis and were asked to get the ball rolling in setting up a group to put together a combined 'bid' from the various organisations in Aylesbeare who would like a cut of the £90k funding. (This sum has since increased). They made it very clear that since the vast majority of the site is not in Aylesbeare, we definitely wouldn't be getting half, but that since the transport disruption very much affects people in the village, we would get some.

It has since been agreed by Grantscape who are administering the funds that we will get at least £30k between us. (1/3 of the total fund.) Grantscape want to see that we are working together and agree that the three relevant organisations are the Village Hall, the Parish Council and Aylesbeare Church. The next step is to submit the signed formal framework for this joint bid, set out below. Can each organisation please sign and return a copy of this document to Jim Roberts, Clerk to Aylesbeare Parish Council:

This letter sets out the framework for the community of Aylesbeare to use to obtain the benefit of funds from the Community Benefit Fund (CBF) derived from the Ford Oaks Solar Park being developed by Infinis.

Aylesbeare plans to formally bid for a third of the CBF and this amount will be divided equally between three village organisations:

Aylesbeare Village Hall
Aylesbeare Rebuild Our Church (The Repair Fund)
Aylesbeare Parish Council

Each organisation will put forward its own schemes to be considered by Infinis' appointed contractor. The bids will be expected to be supported with details of community engagement, financial planning and expected benefits.

The Parish Council will submit details for improvement of the play area in the Rec including the provision of a dog exercise area.

The Church and Village Hall will prepare their own bids but the Parish Council is happy to assist if required.

Each organisation agrees to this framework

Aylesbeare Village Hall

Name ANDREW BENNETT **Signature** A.M.Bennett **Date** 21st July 2026

Aylesbeare Church

Name Reverend Lewis Eden **Signature** **Date** 14th July 2026

Aylesbeare Parish Council

Name ANNA THOMPSON **Signature** **Date** 20th July 2026.

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Chair Initials

Appendix B Budget Review (Qtr 2 2026-27)

Aylesbeare Parish Council Budget 2026-27 - Quarter 2 Review												2026-27 Qtr 2
Detail	2019 -20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 YTD	2025-26 FYF	2026-27 Budget		Actual
Staff Costs	£ 3,068	£ 4,492	£ 4,164	£ 4,915	£ 5,147	£ 4,064	£ 6,300	£ 4,323	£ 7,000	**£ 7,500**		£ 2,801
Village Hall Telephone/Internet	£ 651	£ 355		£ 53	£ 210	£ 158	£ 230	£ 158	£ 210	**£ 210**		£ 98
Donations	£ 300	£ 1,000	£ 802	£ 1,368	£ 993	£ 1,400	£ 1,500	£ 475	£ 1,500	**£ 1,750**		£ -
Subs	£ 136	£ 183	£ 183	£ 188	£ 270	£ 281	£ 320	£ 250	£ 320	**£ 400**		£ 307
Playing Field	£ 154	£ 361	£ 156	£ 1,270	£ 46,900	£ 177	£ 1,500	£ 45	£ 1,500	**£ 1,700**		£ 1,644
Insurance	£ 375	£ 1,336	£ 1,356	£ 413	£ 437	£ 827	£ 1,000	£ 934	£ 934	**£ 1,250**		£ -
Training Courses	£ 165	£ 261	£ 108	£ 90	£ 72	£ -	£ 250	£ -	£ 250	**£ 250**		£ -
Cllr & Clerk Expenses	£ 545	£ 126				£ -	£ 20	£ -	£ 20	**£ 20**		£ -
Stationery & Postage		£ 272	£ 79	£ 29	£ 64	£ 22	£ 100	£ -	£ 100	**£ 100**		£ -
Rents	£ 50	£ 50	£ 50	£ -			£ 150	£ -	£ 150	**£ 150**		£ -
Website & Email Hosting	£ 178	£ 178	£ 898	£ 256	£ 645	£ 216	£ 320	£ 231	£ 1,000	**£ 500**		£ 207
Grounds Maintenance	£ 1,359	£ 933		£ 3,203	£ 36	£ 4,699	£ 4,500	£ 1,485	£ 4,500	**£ 3,500**		£ 2,069
Audit		£ 216	£ 120	£ 63	£ 71	£ 70	£ 85	£ 586	£ 586	**£ 400**		£ 92
Defib		£ 663		£ -		£ -	£ 95	£ -	£ 195	**£ 100**		£ 71
Software Subs	£ -	£ 237	£ 7	£ 7	£ 144	£ 7	£ 10	£ -	£ 10	**£ 10**		£ -
Elections					£ 300		£ 300		£ 300	**£ 300**		£ -
Total	**£ 6,982**	**£ 10,663**	**£ 7,924**	**£ 11,855**	**£ 54,989**	**£ 11,921**	**£ 16,680**	**£ 8,486**	**£ 18,575**	**£ 18,140**		**£ 7,289**

Chair Initials .....

Appendix C AGAR 2026-27 Limited Assurance Review

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Aylesbeare Parish Council – DV0020**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

In the prior year, the smaller authority was exempt from our review, thus we have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR.

The minute reference for Section 2 has been incorrectly recorded on the AGAR. The minutes of the meeting at which the AGAR was approved have been reviewed and demonstrate that Sections 1 and 2 have been approved in the correct order. The smaller authority should ensure that the correct minute references are recorded on the AGAR in future.

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature [signature] Date 29/09/2026

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Chair Initials