

Shobrooke Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of Shobrooke Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th May 2025

The meeting commenced at 7:30 pm

Members Present: Cllr A Jones (Chair) Cllr C Furse (Vice-Chair),
 Cllr L Balkwill Cllr S Collier
 Mrs A Clarke (Clerk)

Public Participation

Bungalow Adaptations: A resident inquired about converting sheltered bungalows into family homes. Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) deems this unlikely due to cost/sustainability, preferring new modular, carbon-neutral builds.

Lettings Policy & MDDC Representation: Disappointment was expressed over MDDC's failure to send a representative to explain their lettings policy, particularly regarding non-local sheltered housing allocations and "sensitive lettings." This item will return to the agenda with a request for MDDC attendance.

Affordable Housing & Youth Retention: A wider discussion highlighted the lack of affordable housing for local young people, forcing some to move away.

Community-Led Development (School Close): The Parish Council discussed potentially purchasing land behind School Close for a village-led development. Ideas included relocating the village hall, expanding the play park, and building mixed affordable/social housing. MDDC's Local Plan supports parish councils acquiring land for such schemes.

Next Steps: It was proposed that the Parish Council contact the landowner to gauge interest in selling and reach out to Tristan Peat (MDDC Forward Planning) to explore community land trust options. The aim is to create a "destination village" that retains young people.

01/05/25 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

1.1 Cllr Jones delivered a reflection on his term, expressing concern over community apathy but also outlining a clear vision for village development and regeneration. While not initially intending to stand again, he offered to make further enquiries regarding the land at School Close as part of continuing his involvement.

Following the discussion, Cllr Jones agreed to remain as Chairman, proposed by Cllr Collier and seconded by Cllr Balkwill and Cllr Furse confirmed a willingness to continue in the role of Vice-Chairman proposed by Cllr Balkwill and seconded by Cllr Collier.

02/05/25 Apologies - were received from Cllr. Jenkins, Cllr Leeming, Cllr Tuffin

03/05/25 There were no Declaration of Interest.

04/05/25 Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record

05/05/25 Applicants for co-option- this was briefly discussed.

06/05/25 Mid Devon District Council

6.1 Planning Applications/Notifications: 25/00614/FULL - An extension to an existing free-range poultry operation. No objections were raised.

25/00591/PNAG - notification for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Councillors had no objections. The property has ample surrounding land. Any neighbour concerns would be a private matter.

6.2 Planning Decisions: 25/00284/PNHH was noted

- 07/05/25** Report from DCC Councillor Keable has been provided please contact the clerk for an electronic copy of this.
- 08/05/25** 8.1 Set dates for the review of :-A rolling review of key parish documents was proposed. Due to changing financial regulations—particularly post-Brexit—several sections require revision. It was agreed to address one document per meeting for manageability.
- 8.2To confirm Insurance Policy – The insurance renewal invoice of £400.79 was received and approved for payment. Councillors expressed a desire to review the full schedule of cover. Efforts are ongoing to obtain the latest policy documentation.

09/05/25 Finance

9.1 Parish Council receipts: £9508.66 precept and interest payment received.

9.2 Parish Council payments which were approved from the current account:

Item	Payee	Purpose	Amount £
09.02.01	Ionus	Website April for approval	£7.20
09.02.02	A. Clarke	Salary and expenses April for approval	£255.28
09.02.03	HMRC *	PAYE (nothing to pay as still in credit)	£0.00
09.02.04	Lloyds Bank	Service Charge April for approval	£4.25
09.02.05	A Jones	Maintenance April for approval	£17.48
09.02.06	A Jones	Maintenance April for approval	£10.49
09.02.07	Ionus	Website May	£7.20
09.02.08	A. Clarke	Salary and Expenses May	£294.83
09.02.09	MDHS	Maintenance - park	£144.00

- 9.3 Approval was given for this month's online payments, included in the above.
- 9.4 Balances: **9.4.1** Parish Council Current Account balance 31st April 2025: £14,308.16.as of the end of April
- 9.4.2 Parish Council Footpath balance (in above current account figure): £311.84
- 9.4.3 Parish Council Reserve Account balance: £10545.45
- 9.5 Budget Monitor was provided.
- Maintenance and Service Charges** - Concerns were raised about a contractor raising rates from £15 to £18 per hour without notice. It was agreed that any future increases should be communicated in advance to allow for council approval.
- Village Hall Use-** It was agreed that a donation of £150 would be made to the Village Hall to cover meeting room usage for the past two years. Moving forward, the Hall Committee will be asked to submit formal invoices or agree on a regular donation basis.

10/05/25 Annual Return - copy circulated separately

10.1 An update on the Internal Audit, highlighted the need for councillors and officers to use official .gov.uk email addresses for council business. This aligns with best practice in governance and information security the clerk will look into this. There was a discussion on vat and how it should be reflected in the budget for distorting the figure, however it was agreed to continue with standard business practices.

The final accounts may require approval in June; a short Teams meeting will be scheduled for formal ratification. It was confirmed that the council is under the £25,000 threshold.

11/05/25 Road and Footpaths

11.1 Outstanding Road and Footpath issues - Cllr Leeming raised concerns about railings over a bridge being repeatedly washed away, this needs to be referred to the footpath wardens.

11/05/25 Parish Council Matters

11.1 Licensing update -although the parish council is not a statutory consultee, its views will be considered on licensing matters. Council supports the event licensing application due to its past success, minimal disruption, and community benefit. Some local opposition was noted. A suggestion was raised that the Parish Council inquire about possible community benefit (e.g., free tickets or a donation toward local play equipment). Hosting such events may enhance the area's visibility and potentially boost local business and temporary employment.

11.2 Efford/Shute Speeding Ongoing challenges with speeding in local areas; limited response from existing channels. A promising contact in Teignbridge (Rhys Andrews –

neighbourhood traffic specialist) may offer practical, experienced solutions. Clerk to request assistance from Mr. Andrews on this. Discussion included alternatives for signage—restrictions on red signage were noted; green signs are compliant with the regulations.

12/05/25 Play Park One quote was received for replacing toddler swings and resurfacing around the roundabout: Swings (2 cradle seats): £2,397 (wooden, 20-year guarantee; metal option pending). Matting (wet pour & rubber tiles): £4,143. Optional items (e.g., off-site soil removal, fencing, water): £250–£476, most deemed unnecessary. Total incl. all options: £7,332.78. Payment plan option available: £1,908/year over five years. Additional quotes awaited (from Commercial Play and Outdoor Play UK). Compliance pack offer includes 5 years of biannual inspections for £399, potentially cost-saving compared to current rates (£140–£145 per single visit). Final decision deferred until three quotes are reviewed.

13/05/25 The Clerk provided a Report - which had an update

15/05/25 Miscellaneous Correspondence

16/05/25 Minor Matters and Items for Future Agenda -Reference was made to other parishes with limited reserves one who has £750, highlighting the need for prudent financial planning. Some neighbouring councils struggling with recruitment and long-term viability.

There was a General discussion over the Crediton Cluster Meetings and possibly more outsourcing of council contracts when Dcc becomes a unitary authority. The meeting at Thorvorton, was discussed it was about the cabinet in MDDC, explaining the various roles in the council. It was stated that road markings were erased and in the interim they have put a sign up.

Condolences were mentioned as Frank Letch, funeral took place Friday 16th May. An Online condolence message has been submitted “On behalf of Shobrooke Parish Council, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Cllr Letch. Cllr Letch served the community with dedication and integrity, and their contributions to the parish will be remembered with gratitude. His commitment to public service made a meaningful difference to the lives of many, and they will be greatly missed by colleagues and residents alike. Our thoughts are with their loved ones at this difficult time.”

18/05/25 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 9th July 2025, at 7.30pm, at the Village Hall