

Shobrooke Parish Council Meeting

Minutes from the Annual Parishioner and Annual General meeting of Shobrooke Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th May 2026

In attendance: Cllr Balkwill (Chair) Cllr Furse (Vice chair)
Cllr Jones MDC Tuffin
DCC Keable Clerk: Mrs. Clarke
1 member of the public

01/05/26 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

01.01 Nomination for Chairwoman were proposed by Cllr Furse and seconded by Cllr Jones

01.02 Nomination for Vice Chairwoman was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Balkwill

Both the Chairwoman and vice chairwoman signed the required acceptance of office forms.

02/05/26 Welcome and Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Leeming, Cllr Collier, MDC Jenkins

03/05/26 Public Participation.

04/05/26 Speaker, Mr. Clear for "helping people to read" failed to attend.

05/05/26 Declaration of Interest - A council member noted that their external employer, the Environment Agency, mandates strict monitoring of external activities, requiring quarterly interest filings and a full legal refusal from discussions if local matters touch directly upon environmental regulations or Environment Agency law.

06/05/26 Minutes from the meeting held on the 11th March 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

07/05/26 Reports were received from from DCC Councillor Keeble

The Village Hall Committee submitted a funding request to the Creative Communities program in Mid Devon for chairs. Councillor Keeble offered to fund the remaining balance from his locality fund.

Environmental Swift Initiative: project to integrate swift nesting boxes into standard planning and building controls across Mid Devon, North Devon, and Coleridge. Due to a declined by 60% over 30 years due to modern roof insulation.

A377 Roundabout Infrastructure Upgrade: Tesco is funding a major 4 month engineering project from June 29th to enlarge and re-engineer the A377 roundabout and the unadopted bus road leading to the railway station. Paving the way for expanded park-and-ride facilities. Substantial traffic disruption is expected with Joseph Lock Way serving as a shortcut. Local village roads are expected to experience increased shortcut traffic.

Mid Devon Local Plan Consultation: The first consultation runs from late May until early July. A second consultation follows in February and March 2027. Mid Devon's target of 6,000 new housing sites means locations within the village may be put forward. **HEALER Land Evaluation:** The Housing and Employment Land Area Assessment has concluded its evaluation of local sites submitted by landowners since 2022. The formal report will be released publicly next month.

MDDC Councillor Jenkins, provided an update on the Crisis and Resilience Fund launching in April 2026. Devon will receive £1.3 million in additional funding, aimed at debt, housing, and well being advice to low-income households

08/05/26 Parish council - Matters arising:

08.01 Insurance The Council discussed and pre-authorized the upcoming payment.

08.02 Updates on matter in previous minutes. Plot of land adjacent to the meeting hall, this specific property is currently on the open market.

08.05 AGAR:

08.05.1 Shobrooke Parish Council internal audit. 08.05.2 The Certificate of Exemption was approved and signed

08.05.3 The Summary of Receipts & Payments for the year ended 31/03/26 was approved and signed. 08.05.4 The Fixed Asset Register for the year ended 31st March 2026 was approved. 08.05.5 The Fixed Asset Risk Assessment for the year ended 31st March 2026 was approved & signed. 08.05.6 The Explanation of Variances was noted.

09/05/26 Mid Devon District Council

09.01 Planning Applications: -

[26/00487/FULL Land](#) at NGR 287394 099876 (Wyke Farm) Shobrooke - Solar Panels. The Council noted that while the footprint is notable, the site is not near a large number of dwellings and supports renewable energy. Decision: No objections raised.

[26/00582/HOUSE](#) Trew House Chilton Crediton - Extension. The Council reviewed the provided site photographs and determined that the project is completely non-controversial given its isolated position. Decision: No objection.

[26/00458/HOUSE](#) Former Great Gutton Farm Cottage - Restoration. The Council expressed support for the restoration, noting that without intervention the structure would eventually collapse. Decision: Supported.

09.02 Planning Decisions: None and **09.03** Planning Appeals: None

10/05/26 Co-option - Vacancy The Council discussed a current vacancy and the legal frameworks surrounding the process of co-opting a new member: **Privacy and Transparency Constraints:** A local resident had previously expressed interest in joining but is currently hesitating due to statutory local government privacy and transparency requirements. These were changed on the 27th May 2026. Another local resident named expressed an interest in joining the council during the meeting. The Clerk recorded his contact information in order to send him the necessary application and co-option paperwork.

11/05/26 Finance

11.01 The following payments were approved:- Hmrc, Paye, Website fees, Dalc. **11.02** The receipts were noted. Parish Council receipts £5600.00 - Precept Interest £3.46 **11.05** The Balances for the end of April (both accounts) £7,705.21 Reserve £8921.18 were noted. **11.04** Bank reconciliation for March and April 2026 was approved.

12/05/26 Roads and Footpaths.

12.01 Footpath Diversion Order - The Clerk and members reviewed correspondence from a new public rights of way officer who claimed the parish council was previously consulted about a path change through a former clerk, in 2023. Records show that the former clerk was not the clerk at that time, and the council's Outlook email history contains no record of this notification. Members expressed frustration over the high turnover of footpath wardens at the county level. The path in question is structurally problematic, routing directly through a resident's back garden while still requiring a formal link to the main road. The council stressed that modifying a public footpath is a highly complex legal procedure that requires absolute transparency and comprehensive community engagement. As local residents regularly walk the route will have received no official notice, the council rejected the county's assertion that a valid consultation took place.

12.02 Roads and Drainage works - advance notices. Upcoming highway drainage works scheduled by the county for early June. Coventry Cross to Charlton Cross, followed by operations from Braddon Corner to Chiltern Gate, before moving onward toward Tiverton. They will require temporary traffic diversions. A substantial increase in local traffic.

13/05/26 Play Park - Sovereign and Inspections. The Council conducted a meticulous financial review of an invoice from Sovereign regarding the play park installation. Identifying several discrepancies based on previous meeting agreements. A central point of contention involves a prompt payment discount offer as the council paid its initial deposit and subsequent instalments exactly when requested, the council should qualify for this discounted rate, a potential refund of over £2,000. The Clerk noted that Sovereign has separately agreed to honour the scheduled equipment inspections which were a primary incentive for the purchase.

14/05/26 Clerks Report - Mid Devon District Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

Audit requests from Sport England's "Active Places" registry regarding the Shobrooke playing field. The database is for principal local authorities to facilitate strategies for planning and targeting funding interventions for local clubs or facility upgrades. Shobrooke playing field is legally protected in a secure trust.

15/05/26 Miscellaneous matters/ correspondence -Community Wi-Fi Project: The community Wi-Fi infrastructure project has stalled due to a councillor in business. The Village Hall Committee requests the use of the playing field to host a fete on Saturday, July 4th. Councillors approved this. The play park and surrounding wildlife and nature areas require maintenance. Restrictions on hedge clearing and tree cutting apply until August but light maintenance is permissible. A date of July 5th has subsequently been set.

16/05/26 Minor Matters and Items for Future Agenda. Bungalow Occupancy and Vacancies: The council noted that the number of vacant local bungalow units has decreased from eight down to six after new residents moved in. A district councillor explained delays are due to probate. The parish council urges the district to reconsider the restrictive 'over-50s or disability' criteria. To broaden the village's demographic profile. 50 years ago the two-bedroom bungalows with large gardens housed working families with young children; the council advocates a policy shift to open these tenancies to younger families.

Bungalow Fire Incident: A recent emergency incident involving a fire brigade response at the bungalows. The fire brigade's intervention revealed substantial damage to the electrical wiring and the roof trusses in the loft space. In light of the repairs, contractors have removed the old chimneys from the two affected bungalows.

Anti-Social Behaviour Neighbourhood Complaints: A Neighbourhood complaint from residents was brought to the council's attention. The council noted that modern tenancy agreements typically prohibit open garden fires, and local thatched-roof homeowners have expressed anxiety regarding drifting sparks. The council recalled that anti-social Behaviour involving drinking was raised at a previous meeting. Because the parish council lacks enforcement powers, residents are being directed to Mid Devon Housing.

17/05/26 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 8th July at 19:30

18/05/26 Meeting closed at: 20:55