



Parish Clerk: Hannah Iles

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Minutes of the meeting of **Strete Parish Council** held in Strete Parish Hall on **Thursday 16th July 2026**

Present councillors:

Ralph Clark, Chair (RC); Ian Cumberlidge IC, Paul Green PG, Timothy Singleton, Vice Chair (TS, Cllr Ian Hutton (IC),

Hannah Iles (Clerk) was also in attendance

PUBLIC FORUM

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Cllr Lawson sent the following report:

What 3 Words needed for the Dog waste Bin at Torcross.

A bin at Blackbird Wood - Unfortunately, due to the unit being already at capacity on this round, no requests for new bin collections are being considered. Longer term, we will be looking at reviewing this but as it stands it's not something we can offer.

Community asset transfer - was asked to enquire about the transfer of the public toilets, and car park at Strete Gate.

Unfortunately, the closing date for this was a few months ago. Matthew Hill (SHDC) has said he will look internally to see if this could be considered and will get back to me either way.

Problems with reporting a missed bin collection via the website – Gemma has said she has personally tested the system, and everything is working as it should. For your information, the website will not let a missed bin collection be reported if it is outside of the reporting window, or if the crew have already logged an access issue. If there was a particular property, then please contact me.

Water safety – Here is a link to the RNLI website, to practise safety in the water – <https://rnli.org/water-safety>.

Be aware of cold water shock, Float to live, Alcohol and water don't mix. Stay safe!

Another reminder to have your bins out by 6am during this hot weather.

Dartmouth Lower Ferry – are introducing a new ticketing system. The new platform will offer improved account management, enhanced security features, and streamlined ticket purchasing. Set to go live from Monday the 13th. Any travel card with a negative balance may become invalid, as part of the transition all existing online account holders will need to reset their passwords before accessing their accounts. If you still don't have an online account, you will still be able to make payments on the day of travel on the Ferry. I know you have sent out a more detailed email regarding this, so I will not go into any more detail.

Susan Watts – Marine Projects officer has been at a seminar this week, she has been looking at: Low Carbon options for our council fleet of vessels in Salcombe and Dartmouth. Engaging in converting one of our crew transfer boats used in the Dart lower Ferry service to electric propulsion. The completion of a year-long government funded project to develop a marine charging infrastructure pathway aimed at smaller harbour ports. Focusing on harbour environment, from water quality monitoring and making data publicly available through a digital dashboard, to raising awareness of the challenges associated with end of lifeboats and exploring potential solutions.

Local Government Reorganisation-As many of you have seen an announcement has been made today! The government has chosen the four unitary authority model. The new structure will be:

An expanded Exeter unitary council

An expanded Plymouth unitary Council

An expanded Torbay unitary council

A fourth being Devon Rural and coastal (we will be within this one)

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

What happens next:

Detailed implementation planning now begins between government and Devon councils.

The existing councils will continue operating as usual during this transition.

The new unitary authorities are expected to come into effect after legislation and transitional arrangements are completed, with elections planned before they go live.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Decision has been made on LGR, proposal from Exeter and Plymouth chosen. DCC will be pursuing a judicial review (based on decision made that did not meet set criteria). Plymouth will have to have elections next May. The plan for the new Coast and Country unitary council is for Totnes, Barnstaple, and Okehampton to host central hubs. The correlation between Labour stronghold proposals being accepted was noted. The implementation for the four new unitary councils will be £80,000,000 costs (terminating contracts, senior officers and consultants), this will be council tax funded. The deficit in the new unitaries budget equates to a 10% rise in council tax for all four of the new unitaries. Successful examples have shown that it takes 5-10 years to get to where government is hoping for it to be, but many unitaries are failing before they get to that point.

Mayoral benefits – this is the only option for extra funding and bringing some powers devolving down.

DCC are keen for satellite hubs to be introduced for further education.

Warding arrangements need to be decided by 17th August. DCC did not find out until today, so they have one month to decide. In some councils it looks like there will be huge discrepancies between representations for those in rural areas vs urban areas.

Fleet replacements over two years are being paid for by savings (end of life vehicles). Amounts set aside for replacing fleet has not been enough, and monies have had to be borrowed.

A379 and back roads - Cllr Brazil thanked Paul for liaising with Simon on the detailed application for the structure fund. Cllr Brazil has asked county to look at the temporary road to Torcross. Tom Vaughan represented highways at the A379 working group and he does not want to muddy the waters by putting in a temporary solution. He also stated that doing nothing is going to cost a lot of money. The temporary bus is going to stop soon (end of August). The access only designation is being pushed through on the roads surrounding Slapton, so that SatNavs and Google maps will be updated to tell people they cannot use those roads while locals will know that they can use. Highways have been asked to cut back the routes more frequently. A site meeting was requested with Natural England to look at the line between Strete Gate and Slapton Turn, Cllr JB had heard that it was generally one of the more positive meetings. There is no date set for a follow up meeting. Cllr Brazil will go back to highways to look at the idea of a pre-application.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies accepted from Cllr Timothy Singleton (TS) and Cllr Samantha Cheese (SC). District Cllr. Laurel Lawford (LL) also sent her apologies.

JUL26:

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON Thursday 18th June 2026

The minutes were agreed by all councillors present and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting. Cllr IC declared an interest in the buddle holes and trim trail replacement.

3. PLANNING AND PLANNING MATTERS

Reference: 1870/26/AGR

Proposal: Alterations, extension to existing property, larger driveway & addition of solar panels

Site Address: 22 Start Bay Park, Strete TQ6 0RY

Councillors discussed application and agreed to support application, no comment to be submitted.

Action: Clerk to submit support, no comment

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

Decision

Reference: 1248/26/HHO

Proposal: Excavation of agricultural land to provide agricultural/irrigation pond

Site Address: Higher Fuge Farm, Fuge, Strete TQ6 0LL

SHDC confirmed prior approval is not required

4. FINANCE

- a) **Finance Reports** – There were no queries regarding the reports. At the PC meeting on 18th June an advance payment of £500 was agreed to be paid to IC for the purchase of playpark materials suitable for the reconstruction of the trim trail. No proof of purchase received. The PC agreed to a short extension and IC agreed that the proof of purchase will be sent to the clerk and chair via email by Tuesday 21st July 2026.
- b) **Councillors approved payment of the circulated invoices and additional invoices brought to the meeting.**
Councillors unanimously agreed to approve all of the payment requests submitted.
Usual payments received in August will be paid in line with contractual terms during August if no meeting is convened and will be submitted for retrospective approval at the September meeting.
- Strete Village Hall (Rent+ WIFI)
 - Clerk's wages
 - HMRC tax and NI
 - DeeBeePay (payroll services)
 - Office expenses – printing and mileage
 - Grants payments – clerk has emailed recipients to confirm payment details. Councillors agreed to amend the grant payment for Ladies Social to £250. Grant for Blackbird Wood is temporarily on hold.
 - The council agreed that a buddle hole invoice could be paid before the August meeting up to a value of approximately £500, if submitted.
- c) **Direct debit and automated payment approval** – Lloyds account fee approved, there are no other direct debits or automated payments on the account but councillors approved setting up of direct debit to ICO and potentially for HMRC for the payment of PAYE tax and employer and employee NIC (should it become mandatory).
- d) **Lloyds signatories**
The forms have been signed and submitted online, awaiting confirmation from Lloyds and clerk will provide training for Cllr SC in September.

Action: Cllr RC to approve payments

5. VACANCIES

No applications received. The advert for the councillor vacancy will remain online and on the noticeboards.

6. SLAPTON LINE

See councillor reports.

Slapton Line Partnership need to be in front of any future storm events. Letter to support Structure Funding bid from the PC is needed by next Friday.

On the SL Walk Stories page more stories have come from Stokenham than any other parish

Strete Gate steps meeting - Strete Estate owners very understanding but any work would need to be done properly and with the approval of the community. SE have no plans to sell off any of their land.

American tourists have expressed a problem of the tank at Torcross being cut-off from the monument via the road.

6. STRETE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Discussion with Phil Baker. Proposed document would not have been accepted by the committee. SHDC are very supportive but are bound by central government rules. Cllr RC has reviewed plan for Bigbury and is going to review Strete NP against the Bigbury plan.

Plan for shop consultation to proceed.

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

7. COMMUNITY

- a) **VILLAGE GREEN** – Risk assessment, to be reviewed at the September meeting.
Councillors met with local resident who was concerned about the height of three trees. Councillors advised that as per the June minutes they had already resolved to trim the trees. The resident kindly offered a donation to the PC as a thank you for maintaining the Village Green.
Cllr IH suggested the village green could be a suitable location for an air ambulance to land.
- b) **PLAYPARK** – The council noted the letter from Strete Estate regarding ownership of the playpark.
The playpark inspection report noted two pieces of equipment of that require attention. Grant funding application declined. PC will approach SHDC for funding options. IC visited a supplier today to purchase suitable materials for the reconstruction of the trim trail but the materials were substandard (playpark equipment must conform to safety standards) and a new supplier has been sought. IC confirmed that all work will be completed by 31st August as agreed at the June meeting. The PC unanimously resolved to appoint Rob Taylor to weld the spinner. The PC will review and approve the playpark risk assessment at the September meeting.
- c) **HIGHWAY AND VILLAGE MAINTENANCE** - Buddle Holes are in fairly good running order (work expected August/September); Village Sweep is planned for September. Hedging opposite Laughing Monk spilling over the road and needs to be cut back. IC agreed that the hedge will be cut back imminently.
- d) **KINGS ARMS** email sent from the Kings Arms. They have lost their chef and are working together to provide a solution for food. Meeting next week.
- e) **VILLAGE HALL** see Cllr SC report
- f) **BLACKBIRD WOOD** – Risk Assessment and wood management meeting requested. Cllr RC sent Chris Ellis an email about complaints received by the PC regarding dog mess. In the email Cllr RC suggested that the PC could delay the grant payment in case it could be allocated for the emptying of a dog waste bin at the woods entrance if one could be sought and SHDC agreed to empty it. The PC are awaiting CE's response.
- g) **POLICE ADVOCATE SCHEME** see Cllr SC report
- h) **ROAD SAFETY** – Inland Road Signage – still some signs to be put out; Speedwatch Update – VAS with solar panel data gathering has been looked at by Paul Potgeiter figures have been produced. Since it was updated approximately 1000 vehicles per week have been travelling southbound. Cllr RC has requested that a report is submitted to the PC each month. There is more speeding later in the evening.
Clerk chased up Mark Phillips again about the additional bus, no response. Strete Estates will support the cutting of hedges in the village. The PC noted the efficiency of Peter Barber in the managing of the estate. Stagecoach have responded to say what the buses should be doing, even if they don't! The union have said their drivers would not turn there unless it was safe. Stagecoach are reviewing in September.
Action: Clerk to find out if DCC would support village green as air ambulance site.
Action: Cllr IC to submit proof of purchase of trim trail materials by 21st July
Action: Clerk to email Chris Ellis regarding welding

8. ADMINISTRATION

Virus protection and file back up waiting for the debit card, form signed by Cllr RC ready to be sent to Lloyds.
Subscriptions – DALC, SLCC – The PC unanimously agreed to continue with the subscriptions to DALC and the SLCC
Councillor training – the PC agreed to arrange the training for November
Roles and responsibilities discussed and all councillors present agreed to review at the September meeting.
Action: Clerk to email DALC regarding training session

9. CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr IH and Cllr PG agreed to attend planning meeting.
Action: Clerk to book two places at planning meeting for Cllr IH and Cllr PG

10. CLERK'S REPORT

No report

11. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Ralph Clark

Highway Safety and Road Works

At the risk of being repetitive, the loss of the road continues to cause major disruption to many local residents and businesses living and working between Dartmouth and Kingsbridge. It is now six months since the road was closed from Sands Road, Slapton to Torcross and, despite reasonable suggestions to temporarily reopen the road, we have been advised that this will not happen until government funding is approved.

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

A structures funding bid of almost £20 million is due to be submitted. This was the Transport for Roads recommendation as being the most suitable method to obtain the funding required to re-open the A379 from Sands Road to Torcross. Dialogue with Devon CC Highways continues through the SLP Inland Roads Working Group.

However, any planned improvements to these routes will require road closures which will create further disruption. Improvement works are likely to be delayed until after the summer season. The SLP Inland Roads Working Group will be involved in deciding where and when to focus on improvement works. Works planning and scheduling is ongoing. The Parish Council Alliance submitted proposals for A379 Protection of existing, short-term repairs and requests to reassess the 'no further retreat' policy of the 2023 SLP Strategy document. It is hoped that a site visit can be arranged with the EA and NE to establish if added protection could be considered for the SL section from Strete Gate to Sands Road.

A full SLP meeting took place on 19/06/26 and minutes are available on the SLP website.

Strete Gate Steps to the Beach and Toilets

Discussions on ideas for improvements at Strete Gate are ongoing. There is another SLP Amenities Working Group meeting on 21 July when it is hoped to have a better idea for moving the ideas forward. Strete PC proposes to prepare a consultation questionnaire on the ideas to determine if these meet with the community's approval. This will also include options about potentially moving the Memorial from the middle car park to Strete Gate.

Strete Neighbourhood Plan (SNP)

Strete PC believes the village continues to benefit from the protection afforded to its character by the existence of the Strete Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst there is a risk that this may be overridden by the government's new National Planning Policy Framework, Strete PC proposes to complete a review of its NP before the five-year period expires. Strete PC proposes to maintain dialogue with SHDC in this matter as the new proposed Local Plan is developed.

SHDC has also advised us that from October this year new regulations authorising delegated planning officers to approve planning applications will replace approval by the planning committee.

SHDC have arranged a Teams meeting to discuss this on 24th September at 5pm.

Strete Shop and Post Office

Strete PC has been advised that although the shop has been advertised for sale for a year there has been no positive interest. As a result, Andy & Monica intend to apply for an application to change the use of the shop to accommodation only in the hope this will create more interest. As this is likely to take some time the shop and post office will remain on the market as a going concern until a change of use application has been approved. However, Strete PC proposes to undertake a community consultation to establish how an alternative (if any) would meet with the aspirations and needs of the community. It is hoped that this will introduce ideas that will be acceptable to the majority of the community and help shape the future sustainability of the village.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

No further news to date. The government is due to inform their preferred LGR proposal by mid-July.

Unless there is a transfer of funding for service responsibilities to Parish Councils there is a risk that the system proposed may fail. It is noticeable that the Leader of Devon CC, Julian Brazil, is pursuing the argument to have a mayor and devolution in the belief that more funding will be available for the needs of people in Devon.

12. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Paul Green

Slapton Line

The Parish Council Alliance continues to work as a productive group. Parishes in the group are all pulling in the same direction. There is a need to expand the Alliance to include more councils.

A presentation was given to Dartmouth Town Council who voted unanimously to join the Slapton Line Partnership (SLP). They have also confirmed attendance at Alliance meetings going forward. Given the confusion about whether they were already members of the SLP or not, working together through the Alliance will be a way to ensure they are proactively engaged on the key issues.

Dartmouth Chamber of Commerce (DCC) also wants to join the SLP. I have introduced Jo Hinde the Chair to Lou and Dan. I will follow this up to ensure that DCC can join. DCC should be a kindred spirit in terms of outlook and priorities. Their main concern is that Dartmouth Town used to have two main roads to it and now has only one. They do not think that improving the inland routes is a realistic longer-term solution.

Follow up on the new SLP Terms of Reference (ToR) has been ongoing. The work is frustrating as no one in the SLP seems to be driving it towards an early conclusion. A suggested organisation chart with roles and responsibilities has been submitted. The suggested structure empowers communities to make the decisions about the issues impacting them. This is an improvement over the way things currently work, where communities have things imposed on them, whether they want them or not.

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

Five requests have now been made for a discussion about priorities for the next 12 months until the current funding expires. To date no one from the SLP has engaged on this issue. If this continues to be the case, I will raise a formal complaint on this matter.

A “clearing the air” meeting has been held with Dan Field. This was useful and identified several areas where we have the same view. For example, the ToR are not fit for purpose.

Lou has refused to update the membership list on the SLP website. This means that the following members are not shown:

- Frogmore and Sherford PC
- Stoke Fleming PC
- East Allington PC
- Dartmouth TC

I will continue to challenge this decision as the current materials do not accurately reflect the balance of membership. The A379 Working Group held a kick-off meeting on 13 July. This was productive and could form the basis for some useful work to be delivered at pace.

The funding bid to get more money to extend Lou’s role and employ more staff is in. A decision is expected in the autumn.

The Environment Agency (EA) ran a drop in event at Stokenham Parish Hall on 30 June. This was a well-attended meeting and a chance for people to understand the EA protection work at Torcross. Devon County Council (DCC) Highways were also present to discuss the funding bid to rebuild the road.

EA hope to start their works as early as August and to complete it next July.

DCC Highways bid will be submitted by 3 August. Parishes need to write a letter of support for the bid. Slapton Line Walk will provide supporting information to Parishes about issues raised and directly to DCC.

Assuming funding is granted DCC expect an extensive planning process to be necessary. I think that their powers as the local Highways Authority to replace an existing, damaged road, should enable this process to be reduced in length and scale. I am starting to discuss this possibility with relevant people. Full planning will be needed for any additional sea defences that are part of the overall scheme.

Healthcare

The Dartmouth Medical Practice (DMP) Patient Participation Group (PPG) is launching a series of Working Groups.

Initially these will focus on communications to patients, Social Prescribing and DMP performance metrics.

These working groups aim to significantly improve the overall patient experience.

The PPG is launching a drive to attract new committee members.

Cllr Sam Cheese

Funding for Playpark

Decision received back from National Lottery that application has been unsuccessful. Initial email gave reason that ‘costs are a statutory responsibility for the council to maintain and therefore they could not contribute’. I emailed back to say it’s new equipment and not maintenance and asked them to reconsider.

Further reply received back has said that our submission does not currently align as strongly as other projects in the pipeline and as demand is incredibly high in the South West region with applications, they have to prioritise and ours does not align strongly enough with:

- Support places, people or communities experiencing poverty, disadvantage or discrimination
- Support people and communities to shape the decisions which affect their lives

Since then, Caroline Voaden (through an email from Hannah) has provided a number of links to potential funding which I will follow through over the coming weeks. Caroline has also said she will raise the question about why South Devon has not been included in the Governments Playground Fund (this is a £18m Playground Fund allocated to 66 local authorities across the country but only includes Torbay in Devon).

Similarly, South Hams have made improvement to 4 playparks across the district with a £190k fund, a question we can put to Julian to ask if there are further funds available.

Village Day 2026

We made the decision to cancel Village Day for this year. We had managed to secure quite a few activities but even after moving from paddock to the village hall, it didn’t feel like we had enough stalls/charities etc, to make it an exciting day and a number of people who made last year so good were unavailable for this year, due to the late notice.

So we will plan for next year and kick off early with a meeting in August to get key things in place and look to make next year a success.

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026

Police Advocate

Data for Jun 2026.

Across South Hams Anti- Social Behaviour shows a positive decrease in incidents being reported. Down 59% compared with same period last year. For Dartmouth Townstal & Rural (which Strete falls under) only 1 incident reported compared to 2 in same period last year.

Other crime across South Hams has increased comparing Jun 26 with previous period, up 20% with the main contributors being shoplifting and 'other' theft (not residential/business/or on person). For Dartmouth Townstal and Rural, 18 incidents reported in June compared to 11 in same period last year, but down on the 21 reported in May 26. Biggest increase in this area was criminal damage.

Generally, there is the increase in summer demand and shoplifting will be a focus in coming months.

Police engagement dates:

Dartmouth – 21st July and 12th Aug

Totnes – 17th and 31st July

Kingsbridge – 21st and 26th July

Ivybridge – 17th July, 1st and 13th Aug

Mentioned a website www.letstalksaferfamilies.org which is available to help parents/carers understand the risks young people face in 2026 and provides support and guidance through toolkits and videos.

Village Hall

Issue raised with signage:

- None to playpark
- On corner of Totnes road/Vicarage road, hidden by hedging
- Village hall will pay for replacement/upgrade – still need to look at

Ian Cumberlidge

Strete gate busy but no issues, footpaths being monitored – Cllr IC will contact ramblers about maintaining footpaths

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 15th September 2026 at 7:00pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed at 21.42

Signed by:

Cllr Ralph Clark (Chair) on 15th September 2026