



Parish Clerk: Hannah Iles
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Minutes of the meeting of **Strete Parish Council** held in Strete Parish Hall on **Thursday 17th September 2026**

Present councillors: Ralph Clark (Chair); Ian Cumberlidge (IC), Paul Green (PG), Timothy Singleton (TS), Ian Hutton (IH)

Hannah Iles (Clerk), County Cllr. Julian Brazil (JB) and were also in attendance. One member of the public was in attendance.

PUBLIC FORUM

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – no report received.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT –

Devon LGR has been paused for review. The judicial review has been paused awaiting clarification of what the pause and review actually means. DCC need to be ready if the Judicial Review does still need to be submitted and whether the three-month clock to submit the JR will be paused. County and districts are working together to see where efficiencies can still be made. e.g. converging back offices - ensuring compatible IT, HR, payroll, procurement can all be looked at. Looking at one front door to local government with service delivery cascaded down. For example, gritting should be panning Devon whereas planning needs to be much more at a local level. Services should be delivered at the lowest level possible to ensure local issues and individuals can be considered. Rather than looking at geography and forcing services to fit the boundaries, local government needs to focus on local services. Need to press on with the mayoral for the extra funding and powers it brings. This is an exciting opportunity. A year has been wasted that should have been focussed on improving services. There is no big rural area that has a successful unitary. Torbay finances are weak, they have had to take on adult services, children's services have been cut. Devon will be doing what is best for Devon residents. If Torbay and Plymouth come in, then we can work together. The view of building more houses is too simplistic. The market should be left to itself, and the government should be building their own social housing not contingent on developers.

Bid has gone into the Department for Transport for the rebuilding of the road. CV MP needs to continue to put pressure on. Lobbying from local government is helpful. The inland road network improvements will commence shortly.

Third monitoring letter from Ofsted for children's services has been excellent.

The bus services were discussed and Cllr Brazil suggested this should be raised at one of the SLP working groups or a combination of impacted parish councils in conjunction with DCC.

Cllr Brazil left the meeting at 19.53

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: District Cllr. Laurel Lawford LL, Samantha Cheese (SC), Paul Green PG

SEP26:

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON Thursday 16th July 2026**
The minutes were 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. There were no requests for dispensations. Ian declared an interest in the buddle holes invoice.

3. PLANNING AND PLANNING MATTERS

i) Reference: 2433/26/LBC & FUL

Proposal: Change of use

Site Address: Barns at Cox's Farm, Strete

The change of use was anticipated.

Action for clerk: Support, no comment

ii) Reference: 2286/26/TCA and 2175/26/LBC and 2174/26/HHO

Proposal: T004: Acacia Tree - Removal of tree/ General garden works within the curtilage of a listed property.

Site Address: The Longhouse Totnes Road Strete TQ6 0RU

Action for clerk: Support, no comment for the TCA

4. FINANCE

a) **Finance Reports:** There were no queries regarding the finance reports and the bank reconciliation was unanimously approved. The second half of the precept has been received.

b) **Payments: All payments presented were unanimously approved.**

- Ian Cumberlidge (buddle holes)
 - Clerk's wages
 - HMRC (PAYE tax and NI)
 - Grant payments to St Michael's
 - South Devon Welding
 - Village Hall
 - SHDC (annual playpark inspection and insurance)
 - The clerk's wages, tax and NI for HMRC, Greenspace and the village hall that were paid in August
- Defibrillator funds to be transferred to reserve

5. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES – VACANCY REVIEW & CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLORS

No applications to consider

8. SLAPTON LINE

SLP working group: suggested that monument is moved for safekeeping over the winter in case of further storms, while a new site is prepared. The PC reviewed the inland road plans. There will be no more discussions regarding the A379 until the Department of Transport has decided on funding. Questions have been submitted to the SLP from the public and the replies will be put on their website. Drop-in sessions are being planned.

9. STRETE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW – no updates

10. COMMUNITY

a) **VILLAGE GREEN** – Cllr TS submitted report on work carried out by Greenspace. Councillors noted that the copse may benefit from some strimming and trees need topping off in October. Cllr Hutton has ascertained that permission from DCC is not required for a temporary emergency landing site for air ambulances. Devon Air Ambulance will need to be consulted and the PC feels that local households should be informed of the plan as a matter of courtesy. Cllr Hutton will draft a standard letter and distribute to residents near the village green. Cllr Clark suggested that the queries from Tom Hancock are responded to and a copy of the letter to householders shared. Councillors unanimously approved the risk assessment for the village green.

- b) **PLAYPARK** – Cllr IC returned the advance payment for the trim trail works as he was unable to source suitable materials. Councillors unanimously agree to proceed with the quote from Chris Ellis to install the trim trail for £550.00. Councillors unanimously agreed to procure the materials from [onlineplaygrounds.co.uk](https://www.onlineplaygrounds.co.uk). The PC noted that to be able to reclaim VAT, any invoice must be addressed to the council. Councillors discussed whether the payment could be made using one of the councillor's personal payment cards, the clerk advised the council that they should enquire whether the company would invoice the PC and accept payment via BACS. In line with NALCs model financial regulations a payment of this amount should not be made using a councillor or employee's personal account.
Action: Clerk to check Safalog (<https://www.onlineplaygrounds.co.uk/blog/safalog>) if payments can be made via BACS
- c) **HIGHWAY AND VILLAGE MAINTENANCE** - Village Sweep completed last week.
Councillors discussed the quote received to cut back the area opposite the Laughing Monk. The clerk reminded councillors of the financial regulations with regards to procurement and councillors discussed the previous amounts that has been charged to manage the area and whether the current quote provided good value for money. Cllr Cumberlidge suggested that the council should be aware that is a conservation area and any work carried out should be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation by talking to the tree officer at SHDC to protect the PC and the contractor. Councillors noted that the area in front of the notice board next to the village shop needs trimming.
- d) **KINGS ARMS** – the pub has closed. Cllr Clark explained the potential options for keeping the pub open under a new arrangement.
- e) **VILLAGE HALL** – no updates.
- f) **BLACKBIRD WOOD** – Councillors had a site meeting with Chris Ellis and discussed the risk assessment and trustees for the wood. Councillors noted that payment of the £250 grant awarded to the woods from the PC is dependent on the response to queries regarding the risk assessment. Andrew Shilstone is not responding to communications from Chris and until he does no clearing of bracken and bramble can take place.
- g) **POLICE ADVOCATE SCHEME** – Councillors noted that there has been no police presence for the CSW group. See Cllr Sam Cheese report for an update on the scheme.
- h) **ROAD SAFETY** – Permission granted for the CSW to operate outside Asherne Lodge. Six vehicles were observed speeding. Councillors discussed a potential site for a third VAS machine on the entrance into the village from the Strete Gate direction. The clerk has chased DCC for an update on a potential new bus stop.

11. ADMINISTRATION

The clerk sent the forms for the new debit card and will contact Lloyds next week if the card is not received.

A letter has been received from the Pension Regulator.

A date for the clerk's appraisal will be set when Cllr Cheese is available.

Councillors agreed to postpone training date agreement until Cllr Green and Cllr Cheese return from their holidays and a new councillor is appointed.

Councillors unanimously agreed to increase the clerk's salary in line with the NJC pay scale for 2026/7. Based on the outcome of the appraisal councillors unanimously agreed to move the clerk's salary to the next spinal column point on the pay scale.

Roles & Projects will be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to complete re-declaration for the Pension Regulator

Action: Clerk to advise payroll provider of change to salary

12. CORRESPONDENCE All correspondence sent prior to the meeting. Lots of responses received to the bus survey.

13. CLERK'S REPORT

Councillor Safety and Privacy Mandate: Effective 29 June 2026, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government enacted new rules to protect elected members from intimidation. Principal and parish authorities must no longer publish the home addresses of elected or co-opted councillors on public registers of interests.

Planning Reform & Committee 'Call Ins': Under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, structural changes are being phased in. Taking full effect on 31 October 2026, new rules will restrict the rights of local and parish councillors to "call in" contentious planning applications to a committee for a final vote. This shifts more processing obligations toward officer-led or automated determinations.

Audit Compliance: "Assertion 10" and Digital Governance: Internal auditors are rigorously testing compliance under "Assertion 10" of the 2025/2026 Practitioners' Guide. To pass future annual audits, the council must ensure that all official correspondence uses generic, authority-owned emails rather than personal or commercial accounts. Strete Parish Council already complies. Additionally, Strete PC website must fully comply with WCAG 2.2 AA digital accessibility laws. Planning comments submitted. Application 2286/26/TCA removal of acacia tree at the Longhouse approved by SHDC. No other decisions received.

Training dates provided for DALC for councillors to confirm their availability.

No interest received regarding councillor vacancies.

Devon County Council approached regarding proposal of village green as an air ambulance landing site. Following initial response this matter has now been taken up by Cllr Hutton.

DCC have been chased again regarding additional bus stop on outskirts of village.

Laminated bus timetables obtained from DCC ready to be displayed at the bus shelter.

Risk assessment progress for play park and village green shared with councillors.

Pension re-enrolment to be completed by 29th September.

Update to rent agreement for the children's play area received. Nigel Spokes, the former landlord, has transferred his interest in the property to The Strete Estate Limited, effective 7th September 2026. The Strete Estate Limited is now Strete Parish Council's landlord for the purposes of the play area tenancy agreement. Payment request for rent is expected in December/January.

14. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT no report

15. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Tim Singleton

No additional grass cutting instructed during the summer break due to the very dry weather. However, as the grass is now growing rapidly, the plan is to instruct Greenspace to cut all areas (where accessible) by early October.

Requested that Greenspace provide outstanding invoices in advance of the September PC meeting.

Attended SLP memorial working group with Ralph. Current SLP plan is to dismantle the monument and place it in storage until an agreed, planned, and funded alternative location can be found.

Attended SLP backroads working group with Ralph. Good progress overall, although timetable for planning and improving the Totnes Road will be later than expected as it is not included in the first tranche of works. Work on the other backroads is also delayed due to the need for dormouse (and other) surveys.

A local resident has requested that an existing dog waste bin, currently located at the village bus stop, be moved due to its close proximity to their home and the bus stop. Also reports of this waste bin overfilling. To be raised at the PC meeting for consideration.

Cllr Sam Cheese

Funding for play park: No progress made on this. Caroline Voaden provided a list of charities that could potentially help, but I have looked into each one and they are either too small a maximum amount of money they are prepared to give (Blind Spark Foundation, Devon Gov) or closed for any further funding requests for 2026 (co-op, Bupa Foundation). There was a recent Government Playground Fund set up in June of this year, which looks to deliver exactly what we need, across many areas of the country. For some reason though South Devon is not eligible to apply for this as it named specific areas. Caroline has said she will raise in parliament why nowhere in South Devon included and if any funds will become available.

Police Advocate Scheme: inspector Ben Shardlow has gone on secondment to the College of Policing as of end of Aug and is due to be replaced by Inspector Wes Watkins formally on the 12th October. There hasn't been a monthly call for a couple of months, but Inspector Watkins is looking to restart them once he's formally in post and I can give updates then. Village Day 2027: I've kicked off the organisation for next year's event. We have a date 7th Aug 2027, a venue (paddock and garden as last year) and a team of 8 so far. First get together is 6th November. If anyone else is interested in getting involved at this early stage, please let me know. Ideas/suggestions very welcome.

Cllr Ian Hutton

Damage to road surface at the bottom of Hynetown Road.

I reported continual damage from Double decker buses striking the A379 road surface at the bottom of Hynetown Road to DCC and their response is that they are not concerned. "At the present time we are not proposing any intervention.....the bus operator, Stagecoach, has not raised any concerns..... only minor surface scraping to the carriageway has been observed."

Response to Questionnaire - Double Decker bus use in Strete and surrounding lanes.

The bus service is appreciated and villagers would not like to see it disappear.

The shuttle bus to Slapton has been very well received and considered much more appropriate than double decker buses. Double decker buses are considered inappropriate with respondents noting severe congestion along the lanes, particularly three-mile-lane; double deckers running mainly empty; dangerous reversing from Hynetown Road out onto the blind corner on the A379; some observations that double decker buses are travelling along the whole length of Hynetown Road.

Emergency Air Ambulance Helicopter landing site in Strete.

Initial response from Tom Hancock on behalf of DCC was to want to charge SPC £250 for the submission, which (unbelievably) he suggested might be recoverable from Devon Air Ambulance!! I wasn't happy with this response and consulted UK CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) directions and it is abundantly clear that an emergency helicopter already has special permission to land wherever the pilot sees fit. I advised Mr Hancock of this and that we didn't need DCC's permission and therefore didn't require him to take any further action.

Stagecoach Web Site - as applicable to Strete.

No further notices since 3/2/2026

3/2/2026 Road Closure: Slapton to Torcross - temporary shuttle service between Kingsbridge and Torcross. See Stagecoach website for shuttle timetable.

Action: Cllr TS will send details of the new location for the dog bin and the clerk will check with SHDC if they can collect from the new location and check the landowner and any permissions that may be required.

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

Meeting closed at 21.19