

MORCHARD BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 5 January 2026 at 7.00pm

At Morchard Bishop Memorial Hall

Present: Simon Baker, (Chair), Dawn Parkhouse (Vice Chair), Sarah Gillbard, David Gillbard, Andy Hankins, Stephen Leese, Les Partridge, Sheila Sinclair, Debbie Ticehurst, Sarah Vere, and David Parker (Parish Clerk).

1. **Apologies:** David Grant, County Councillor Steve Keable, District Councillor Helen Tuffin, District Councillor Mark Jenkins (all due to adverse weather conditions).
2. **Members of the Public** – No Members of the Public attended.
3. **Academy Head of Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School** – Unfortunately, due to the adverse weather, Hanah Bancroft was not able to attend the meeting as arranged but would attend the meeting of the Parish Council in February.
4. **The minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1 December 2025 were approved - Proposed: Sheila Sinclair, seconded: Debbie Ticehurst - carried unanimously.
5. **Matters Arising (not dealt with elsewhere in the minutes):**
 - Stephen Leese is co-ordinating Neighbourhood Watch in the area. Stephen had drafted a table of contacts.
 - Councillors would continue to note and bring to the attention of the Parish Council those signs in the parish that needed cleaning.
 - Carers and Respite – Debbie Ticehurst and Sheila Sinclair have met with a parishioner and after the article in the Morchard Messenger, three people had made contact with them. A Coffee Morning will be held for those with caring responsibilities on 9 January 2026 at The London Inn.
6. **Finance.**

A cashflow table for January was circulated which explained the income and expenditure figures for December/January. Expenditure for January is £396.23 on the main account, nothing on the Reserve account and nothing on the footpaths account. Funds at the end of December before payment of these invoices stood at: Reserve Account, £9,837.10; Current Account £10,495.19; P3 Account £3,627.69.

Current Account Receipts and Invoices to be paid:

British Gas Energy	Outside lighting of the Church	£ 26.29 Direct Debit
SHT Dockings	Grass Cutting – Sept - Nov	£267.00 BACS
MDDC	Grass Cutting at Frost (annual)	£102.94 BACS

The Current account stands at £10,098.96 after payment of these invoices, the Reserve account stands at £9,837.10 including funds for Jubilee Funds (£113.46), DAAT (£150.48), Clock Face fund (£613.99), Election Expenses (£4,000), and the P3 account stands at £3,627.69.

Stephen Leese proposed, and Sarah Vere seconded that these invoices be paid and the Financial report accepted – carried unanimously.

7. Planning

25/01670/CLU	Certificate of lawfulness for the replacement of roof materials; replacement of double barn doors with garage door and replacement of 2 doors.	Land and Buildings at NGR 275295 104685 Noahs Ark, Morchard Road
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After Discussion: Les Partridge proposed that this application be SUPPORTED, Sarah Gillbard seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

25/01699/LBC	Listed building consent for internal and external works to restore property from 2 dwellings to 1; replacement of 5 windows and 1 external door.	The Forge, Morchard Bishop
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After Discussion: Les Partridge proposed that this application be SUPPORTED, Sheila Sinclair seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

25/01734/HOUSE	Erection of steel framed garage/store following demolition of existing wooden barn.	Sharland House, Morchard Bishop
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After Discussion: Stephen Leese proposed that this application be SUPPORTED, Dawn Parkhouse seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

25/01755/HOUSE	Create an opening to connect longhouse section to annex to return property to one dwelling; erection of carport with solar panels on south facing aspect of roof and space to provide energy storage batteries and external groundworks to improve access.	Wigham, Morchard Bishop
25/01756/LBC	Listed Building Consent for the replacement of windows; create an opening to connect longhouse section to annex to return property to one dwelling; erection of carport with solar panels on south facing aspect of roof and space to provide energy storage batteries and external groundworks to improve access.	Wigham, Morchard Bishop

After Discussion: Stephen Leese proposed that both applications be SUPPORTED, Sarah Vere seconded the proposal and it was CARRIED.

Planning: decisions / appeals / withdrawals:

25/01522/FULL Granted	Erection of general purpose agricultural building	Land at NGR 275608/104882 Willowbrooke Farm, MB
25/1709/PNAG No Objection	Prior Approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Information Only	Land at NGR 278954 107596 Knightstone Down, MB

8. County and District Councillors' Headlines

Councillor Steve Keable's report was circulated in advance of the meeting. It contained information on the County and MDDC's Local Government Reorganisation proposals and local elections, Active Travel funding and the Boniface Cycle Trail from Crediton to Exeter, and the Public Libraries Public Consultation which would expire on 22nd February 2026.

Councillor Helen Tuffin's report was circulated in advance of the meeting. It contained information on an offer to Businesses in mid-Devon to access free tailored support, Christmas Tree Collections, the new access gates to Leisure Centres and Pots and Pans re-cycling.

9. Correspondence not dealt with elsewhere in the meeting:

- The Chairman of the Memorial Hall had written to ask whether any members of the Parish Council had signed paperwork to confirm to the Charity Commission that they were trustees of the Memorial Hall. It was confirmed that no members had signed such documentation, but they would have no objection in doing so.
- Angharad Willaims the Director of AWP wrote to offer planning training to parish councils. – The offer was noted.
- Simon Williams, the developer of Belstone View, had agreed to provide two 170L Grit Bins on the development which the Parish Council would then fill out of their own stocks. The Clerk confirmed that he had recently ordered 2 tons of salt for the Parish.
- Two residents had sent the Parish Council a letter thanking them for their support for their Planning Appeal which had now been concluded successfully so far as they were concerned.

10. Ongoing Matters:

- a) Roads, Signage, Hedges, Potholes, Footpaths and Mud on roads, Road Wardens and Finger Posts:
Nothing to report.

- b) Accidents and Incidents: There had been accidents caused by Ice on Cann's Mill Road. **The Clerk was asked to write to the Highways Liaison Officer to ask for "Danger- ICE" Signs to be placed at the top and bottom of the hill.** The Goal nets owned by the Football Club were damaged before Christmas, CCTV was being improved at the Playing Fields in response to this vandalism.
- c) Defibrillators – All checked and in working order, the Pads would need replacing soon.
- d) Emergency Plan – **Simon would send out an e-mail to arrange a meeting.**
- e) Neighbourhood Plan – Stephen Leese had drafted a neighbourhood plan document contents page. Stephen was researching the Willand Neighbourhood Plan.
- f) Parking at Polson Hill – Vehicles have not been parking on the grass since Sarah and Andy spoke to them. It was agreed to watch how matters progressed before placing signs on the grass.
- 11. Crediton Area Association of Local Councils Meeting Report** – No meeting had taken place since 4th December 2025.
- 12. Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS)** – Awaiting hearing back from DCC Highways Liaison Officer.
- 13. Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance** – The County Councillor had encouraged that the Parish Council joined the alliance to achieve delivery of a modernisation programme for the North Devon (Tarka) Line passenger rail service between Exeter and Barnstaple. After discussion, Stephen Leese proposed that the Parish Council Resolve to join the North Devon Railway Development Alliance with no financial obligation. Sarah Vere seconded the proposal and it was carried.
- 14. Grass around War Memorial, Bus Shelter and Polson Hill** – Stephen Dockings, our contractor, had proposed that turf was laid into the tyre ruts across the greens and protective posts/bollards put in place. The Parish Council agreed that protective posts should be put in place, offers were made of postcrete and creosote. The Parish Council also wished that the ruts be filled with topsoil and grass seed spread over the affected areas. The offer from Stephen Dockings to realign the chains around the War Memorial, without charge, was gratefully accepted.
- 15. Trustees and Village Organisations Reports**
- Sustainable Morchard – No Report.
 - Memorial Hall – There had been no meeting of the Memorial Hall Committee since the last Parish Council meeting.
 - Morchard Bishop Playing Fields – Hire fees were under discussion. The discussions with the Sports and Social Club about the Bar Licence were likely to need mediation. Devon Communities Together were offering to mediate but were asking an exorbitant fee. **The Clerk was asked to see if a neutral person known to the Parish Council would agree to mediate.** The Committee were awaiting plans from the architects revamping the Referee's room and the changing rooms. Ongoing maintenance and more CCTV were also under discussion.
 - School – Nothing to report.
 - Churchyard – There would be a meeting in the Spring to consider the Memorial Wall for cremated remains.
 - Parochial Church Council (PCC) – The PCC had just finished its financial year and were keeping afloat. The Open Gardens Festival would take place on Saturday 30 May 2026 to align with the Two Moors Way Festival on Friday 29 May and during that week. The Christmas Bazaar and Christmas Tree Festival would be repeated. The group leading the application for a lottery grant had asked if the Parish Council and Councillors as individuals would write letters in support of their appeal. The Parish Council, particularly bearing in mind the siting of the public toilet in the Church Tower, **asked that the Clerk send the letter in support. Andy Hankins would fit a new digital timer for the outside lighting of the Church Tower.**
- 16. Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School** – A letter had been received from a group of concerned parents. There would be a meeting on Friday 9 January for those with children receiving wrap-around care. The Parish Council would make arrangements to be advised of the outcome of this meeting. The School were recently deemed GOOD in its OFSTED report. **The Chairman would draft a holding letter to the group of concerned parents.**
- 17. Items for Future Meetings** (Note – items in this section cannot be discussed – merely scheduled for a future meeting).
- A resident brought to the attention of the Parish Council the dangerous raised block paving at Corner Close. **The Clerk would bring this to the attention of the Highways Liaison Officer and Cllr Steve Keable.**

Meeting Closed at 8.34pm

The next meeting of Morchard Bishop Parish Council will be on **Monday 2 February 2026** at the Memorial Hall **at 7.00pm** where we will consider our Governance Documents.

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