

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF YEALMPTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 10th MARCH 2025 AT 7.30 PM AT THE COMMUNITY ROOM, STRAY PARK, YEALMPTON.

Members of the public present: 3

Public Forum – Mike Cosby, the Parish Council internal auditor spoke to Council about the option of moving to an accounts package for financial management. At the moment, the Council uses an excel spreadsheet. Further investigation into the options will be undertaken, with a view to any move to an accounts package taking place with effect from the new financial year.

Councillors present: Cllrs Baldry, Endicott, Craddock, Tucker, Riley, Street, Thomas and District Cllr Edie. Cllr Thomas joined after item 11. Cllr Edie stayed until after item 6.

No	Minute	Action
1)	To receive apologies for absence Cllrs Hopkins, McKay and Barton	
2)	Report from County Council – Cllr Dan Thomas See attached report.	
3)	Report from District County Council. Cllr Edie See attached report. Resident's Discounted Parking Scheme - Cllr Edie confirmed that the registration would be for the car, not the person.	
4)	Councillors' Declaration of Interest: none.	
5)	Previous minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 th January 2025 were approved and signed. Cllr Craddock did not accept that the definition of "pesticides" includes herbicides and algaecides. He proposed and it was seconded that contractors "may use herbicides and algaecides in an appropriate manor". The majority of Council voted against this.	
6)	Planning matters a. A brief update was given on applications relevant to the Parish. b. 0476/25/TCA Paradise House 77 Church Lane Yealmpton PL8 2HG. YPC do not comment in detail on matters relating to Trees in Conservation Areas. The standard YPC response will be made in relation to this application, placing reliance on the judgement of the SHDC tree officer.	
7)	Financial matters a. Accounts to end of February were reviewed. b. Payments were approved totalling £2,281.21. c. It was agreed that YPC would move to an accounting package. The package would be chosen by the Responsible Finance Officer with the Internal Auditor, up to an annual cost of £500. d. It was noted that funds in the current account could be placed in an instant access savings account to generate some interest. The RFO would be left to transfer funds to the most appropriate instant access account.	
8)	Environmental Report See attached report.	
9)	Local Government Reorganisation a. Cllr Baldry and the Clerk attended a meeting hosted by SHDC where their favoured approach for LGR was outlined. The SHDC favoured approach, being referred to as the 1, 4, 5 plan is for a Unitary Council of a slightly expanded Plymouth City Council (1). A Unitary combining the South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon areas with Torbay (4) and a Unitary including East, Mid and North Devon alongside Torridge District and the City of Exeter (5). A letter of agreement outlining this had been signed by the 7 District	

	Councils that covered these areas. Plymouth City Council had approached 13 of the Parishes surrounding the city to invite them to discussions about joining a larger Plymouth Unitary Council. The 13 Parish Councils/Town Council involved need to consider which option would be the best option for them (joining Plymouth in a Unitary Council or being part of a larger South Devon Unitary Council outlined above). At this stage, the 13 Parishes/Town will have no say in whether or not they are included in the Plymouth City Unitary proposal. PCC have assured us that there will be collaboration over the detail of the proposal at a later date. SHDC offered to facilitate a meeting between these parish/town councils to enable them to discuss the proposals and the two plans. The Clerk to Ivybridge Town Council offered to arrange this meeting. The decision about which unitary authority we would form part of, will be taken by central government in December 2025. b. A meeting had taken place between Plymouth City Council and the Clerk, where Plymouth had outlined their proposal in a little more detail. The Clerk had raised concerns that PCC had little or no experience of dealing with rural matters. PCC accepted that they do not currently have all the expertise in all areas required and that this would have to be acquired in some form. PCC stressed that there would be little change in real terms for the residents of Yealmpton under their proposal. They saw the role of Parish Councils continuing. They saw Parish Councils remaining involved in Planning matters. The Clerk asked how much say we have in their process and the officer from PCC was clear that at this stage, we do not have any say in the matter. Beyond the 21st March deadline for outline proposals, they want to work closely with Parish Councils to address these concerns and create a detailed plan together with Parish Councils before the submission of detailed plans in November 2025. Central government will make a decision in December 2025 as to the boundaries of new Unitary authorities. c. YPC were invited to a more detailed briefing by Plymouth City Council on 12th March. It is also hoped that there will be more detail regarding the 1, 4, 5 Plan from South Hams and any proposals that Devon County Council will make shortly. The plans have to be submitted to central government by 21st March. It was felt that all the proposals should all be considered before YPC agreed a position. It was felt that this would be a good topic for the Parish meeting in April. Parishioner's views can be considered and then the Parish Council could formulate a position to outline to our MP. Noting that YPC have no direct input into LGR and any view coming from our Annual Meeting is purely to inform our MP and others. d. Cllrs Thomas and Craddock will attend Rebecca Smith MP's online event to share views on local government reorganisation.	
10)	The Parish Room a. It was agreed that we would remain with the incumbent fire and emergency lighting servicing contractor. The annual cost of £352 plus VAT was agreed. b. It was agreed that two new tables would be purchased to replace two of the heavy ones. The existing ones would be offered to residents in the village via Facebook before being disposed of if there was no take up. c. The longer term heating solution would be considered and recommendations made to Council at the next meeting.	Clerk to sign and return agreement. Clerk to arrange and purchase. Cllrs Endicott and Riley to consider

	d. It had been raised by Cllr Barton that it is hard to put the internal door key in the existing key safe and did the internal door need to be locked? Cllr Endicott agreed to look at the existing key safe to consider whether it could be replaced with a larger key safe. There were concerns that the external door could be unreliable. e. Cllr Barton had reported that the Hoover was not working. Cllr Craddock agreed to check if the Hoover needed a new bag or whether the Hoover would need to be replaced.	options and report back. Cllr Endicott to report at the next meeting.
11)	Road Safety A costing had been obtained to remark the SLOW signs on Yeo Lane and refresh the existing three 30 mph roundels and have a new 30 mph roundel marked on Ford Road, where no road marking was in place. It was £3751.40 plus VAT. The Clerk had been advised by the Neighbourhood Highways Officer that the bus stop cages on Ford Road would require DCC Highways approval and surveying before they could be installed and it would be better for YPC to obtain the costs for the refreshing of the roundels and SLOW signs, that would not require Devon Highways consent. However, it was felt by YPC that the Bus Stop cages were important parts of the scheme and if YPC was to fund the refresh of the roundels and SLOW markings, that it would be worth pursuing the installation of the bus stop cages.	Clerk to obtain costings for whole scheme and obtain more details of the costs of the surveys for the bus stop cages.
12)	Dementia Action Week Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm had written to the Clerk to ask that the Parish Council pay the room hire for an event to take place in Yealmpton during Dementia Action week (19th – 25th May). YPC unanimously agreed to fund the room hire for an event in Yealmpton.	Clerk to respond.
13)	IDALC a. The minutes were reviewed. It was noted that Cornwood had a gully cleaner that they were willing to share. It was agreed the Clerk would contact Cornwood's Clerk and see if this is something that we would want to use – presumably hiring it with their lengthsmen to operate. b. It was agreed that we would remain part of IDALC and the subscription fee would be paid £7 p.a.	Clerk to contact Cornwood's Clerk. Clerk to arrange the payment.
14)	Annual Parish Meeting It was agreed that there would be two main topics. The success of the Tidy Village Group and the Local Government Reorganisation. The meeting would be on 14th April, with an earlier start time of 7pm. A notice would be placed in the Yealmpton Press and posters would go on notices boards and Facebook.	Clerk to arrange.
15)	Report from Councillors/Clerk on actions arising from previous meetings. a. Cllr Tucker proposed that a new horizontal trash screen was installed to catch the leaves before they reached the lower trash screen. The horizontal trash screen should allow the leaf material to be broken up and for it then to pass through both trash screens and not cause the overflow. Having been unable to ascertain the landowner, it was agreed that Cllr Tucker	

	would go ahead and install the second trash screen to see if this solves the problem. b. Yealmbridge verge – Clerk reported that Nick Colton of Devon Highways confirmed that part of the verge appeared to be accumulation of mud and could be removed if we wished. c. Pavement Yeo Lane to Yealmbridge - the estimated traffic management costs alone were between £1,000- £1,500 per day. It was likely to take a minimum of three days. There would also be the costs of the digger to clear the debris. A licence for the closure of the pavement would be required and an appropriately qualified operator would have to have supervision. The material would have to be legally disposed of. The landowner had given consent for the arising to be placed on hedge, but there would likely be too much for this to be feasible. Total costs could therefore be £5,000- £10,000 to clear the pavement. This could be prohibitively expensive for the Parish Council to fund. Cllr Thomas agreed to speak to Devon Highways about whether traffic management would be required and what could be done.	Cllr Tucker to action Cllr Thomas and Cllr Tucker to action.
16)	Appointment of Contractors a. Asset Maintenance - Jason Francis, would continue as the contractor. His proposed hourly rate was acceptable. It was agreed that he would be asked to report on his activity each month. b. Gardening Contact – Cameron Harriss was in the process of quoting for the Gardening Contract. His proposed hourly rate was acceptable. The Clerk would continue to work with Mr Harriss on an overall cost for the gardening work. Mr Harriss had cleared some of the footpath between Bowden Hill and the A379 and had done a good job.	Clerk to inform the parties.
17)	Report on allocated areas of responsibility a. Cllr Barton and the Clerk had met with DCC regarding the surface of footpath 20. We had been awarded some additional funding (to be used subject to Environment Agency consent) to infill areas of the erosion. b. Proposed new path between Collaton and Yealmpton. Cllr Baldry reporting that the stumbling block is that there is no funding available.	
18)	Correspondence a. 80th Anniversary of VE Day celebrations. YPC representative have been invited to Newton and Noss Parish Council's lighting of their beacon. Clerk to obtain details. The bells of St Bartholomew's will be rung. People will be encouraged to pursue their own celebrations to mark the occasion. A notice will be placed in the Yealmpton Press. b. Other correspondence was noted and representatives from YPC were to attend upcoming events. Meeting closed at 9.38pm	
	Date of next meeting: 14th April 2025	

District Council Report – Cllr Tom Edie SHDC – March 2025

Residents Discount Parking Scheme Residents can now sign up for the Resident Discount Parking Scheme. Please help share the following information. **Messages to residents:**

- You can get discounted parking at all our car parks for a £5 yearly admin fee.
- Please have one of the following documents at hand before you visit the website:

👉 V5 log 👉 Motability Agreement 👉 Leasing Agreement

- You can find further information from our FAQs and apply online at: www.southhams.gov.uk/residents-parking-scheme

Devon County Council Elections - Candidates If you are interested in standing as a Devon County Council candidate at the May elections, you can find out information from DCC's website what it means to be one of their councillors.

If you wish to request a nomination pack for one of the South Hams divisions, please email elections@southhams.gov.uk stating your name and the division in which you wish to stand so that we can email a set of papers to you. If you would prefer them posted to you, please remember to include your address.

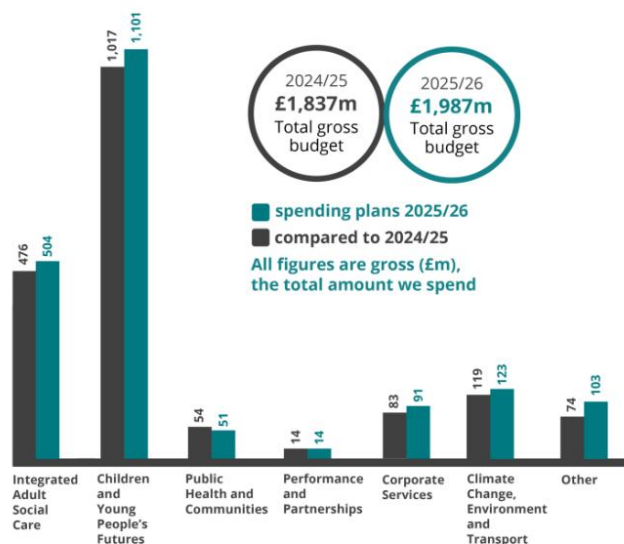
Information on the election timeline can be found on our website [here](#).

County Council Report – Cllr Dan Thomas

I attach the headline budget figures from County Hall, as well as the latest position on Local Government Reform:

Since last month, County has agreed its budget for 2025/26 which includes the usual 2.99% rise in council tax plus the extra 2% for integrated care.

This graph, representing spending, is quite useful:



The pie charts below illustrates where the money comes from:

Local Government Reorganisation latest:

It appears that Plymouth City Council wants to take over the 13 parishes to the west of the South Hams (currently in Rebecca Smith MP's South West Devon constituency).

The Districts have offered a 4:5:1 unitary solution

4= West Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torbay.

5= Torridge, North Devon, Mid Devon, East Devon, Exeter

1= (Greater) Plymouth

We wait to see that County will propose.

At the same time, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth leaders are having discussions about establishing a mayoral strategic authority.

Environment Report

YEG Annual report 2024/5

River Yealm water quality.

Emerging areas of concern relating to water quality were identified in a report on results from our first year's CSI measurements. We continue to share information with other groups that are

working towards improvement of water quality in the catchments (Yealm and Tamar) on the best equipment and quality control measures to use. Our data has helped the EA and SWW focus on areas that merit intervention, particularly relating to problems at Newton Stream and The Piall and resulting in effective actions.

Information sharing between partners is essential to establish what is affecting our river. We make our data freely available but there is often reluctance from other organisations to share theirs, even if they are required to by law. It took time and effort for RYWQG to succeed in obtaining the on-off times for all overflows of untreated sewage on our river during 2023. An Environmental Information Request (EIR) was submitted to SWW in April 24 and refused. RYWQG subsequently appealed and obtained the information in mid 2024. RYWQG has continuing concern about pollution arising from Lee Mill Industrial Estate. SHDC has provided a map of drainage points within Lee Mill Industrial Estate, but this did not include information on the source of drainage or destination of foul water. SHDC claim that they do not hold that information which seems odd as this information must have been part of their applications for planning consent.

YEM is in discussion with the Environment Agency and Wild About The Erme River (WATER) regarding a scoping study towards mapping soil type, agricultural practice and surface water drainage throughout both the Yealm and Erme catchments so that mitigating schemes that will help cleanse that runoff can be developed.

Cllr Thomas is speaking about community involvement at the Clean Rivers Clean Seas Assembly organised by South Devon River Champions in two weeks, hopefully drawing upon and emphasising all the above.

This gives an indication of the range of bodies involved when there are problems with our water. Their geographical areas of influence all differ. Some very good news is that there are now groups whose main job is to co-ordinate information, policies and action plans affecting the whole river. For the Yealm, the main groups are the South Devon Catchments Partnership (SDCP) and the Yealm Estuary Management Group (YEMG). We are represented via YEM.

The Catchment Partnership was able to prioritise our six major pollution concerns highlighted by our data. These form the backbone of our strategy for the Yealm with all key partners. We are now involved in developing the Catchment management plan for the Yealm which is a very significant step and again involves all major players working in our catchment (EA, WRT, DWT, SWW and others). Not many river groups have a catchment plan in place or have evolved to this level.

Work with young people

On our behalf, YEM (Yealm Estuary to Moor) continues to address the government's policy on climate change and sustainability in educational settings. Ruby's Wood is used by ICC for students to practice their research methods and collect their own data and records about the River Yealm, its biodiversity and its flora and fauna, by monitoring of birds, bats, butterfly & moths, beetles, bees, fish, river fly in order to identify species change indicators along the river. Over time we hope the data will become a benchmark against which other sections of the river Yealm could be compared. In September 2024 a cohort of 28 new students began the A level Environmental Studies course. YEM provides information, web links, and material support for each school in the catchment according to need. School engagement can be extraordinarily difficult: the seven YEM catchment schools belong to five separate federations, affiliations, trusts or associations and some outsource forest school, nature and outdoor activities, further complicating easy relationships.

Biodiversity

South Devon Natural Landscapes have chosen the Yealm estuary for Yealm Estuary Saltmarsh and Intertidal Habitat Resilience project. Specialists from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology surveyed the saltmarshes around the fringes of the Yealm Estuary in February. The surveys will help inform the delivery of future detailed conservation management options to enhance and/or restore natural habitats. Saltmarshes act as carbon traps, shoreline buffers, biodiversity hotspots, fish nurseries and bird feeding stations.

On parish land, in addition to the work done with schools in Ruby's Wood, YEM is exploring monitoring of birds, bats, butterflies and beetles for representative sites where YEM has made habitat interventions in upper, middle and lower reaches of the Yealm. Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field) will be one such site.

Plants and habitats

We provide advice and assistance for nature recovery projects to local non-farming landowners (NFL) in order to make changes that benefit our environment. There are 32 NFLs in the parish who want to improve wildlife and biodiversity. They own and manage a large proportion of land in the Parish and do not have the government support offered to people with commercially farmed land. We work jointly with the Environment Agency, Devon Wildlife Trust, Wild About the Erme River and ParkLife CIC.

In 2024 we undertook wetland restoration projects including a 90 metre stream realignment with leaky dams, ponds and bunds, over 375 metres of new fencing to protect water courses and prevent livestock access, creation of two new cattle drinking points and approximately 10 metres of stone wall restoration. Two acres of new wildflower meadow was created, 195 metres of new hedges and over 2,100 trees planted, all following nature restoration advisory visits. YPC has part-funded these initiatives for land in our parish.

Already in 2025 we have had planting days at Worston Farm (1500 trees) and Trap House, Yealmpton. Planting is planned for Ewells Wood (3,000 trees over 12 hectares) and we will plant around 1,850 hedge saplings with guards and stakes at Torr Farm to create a wildlife corridor hedge 275-metres long with saplings from local tree nurseries. These include hazel, hawthorne, dog rose, spindle, hornbeam and wyche elm, from seeds gathered at previous Tree Seed Sundays. In addition, at Long Meadow by Steps River Lane, we will plant 80 low density trees in guards. The 500 holly trees planted last season in the wood beside the Yealmpton sewage works that had not survived were removed and a number were replanted in gaps. All planting is done by volunteers under supervision and following health and safety assessment.

The tree nursery at Lodge Gate Field has been very successful with over 2,000 trees grown from results of Tree Seed Sunday 2023. The seedlings have to be moved from planting trays to root trainers so a polytunnel with staging was erected to enable this. When big enough they are planted out in the ground (in the nursery) and labelled ready for use in spring. Daily watering is needed during summer months. An area near the entrance to Lodge Gate Field has also been prepared as a wildflower meadow. Veterans Outdoors is still focussed on the development of an environment hub within the Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field). Plans to source funding continue. Veterans Outdoors does have planning consent for shipping container buildings on Lodge Gate Field.

The INNS (Invasive non-native species) programme continued in 2024 with nine bashing events for Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed on five sections of the river over 3-months with 20 volunteers. Locations were based on an extensive survey along the river. We have bid for funding from the EA's Water Restoration Fund for further weed control and monitoring in 2025. In Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field) the young trees were overcome by weeds during the summer of 2024 and these were brush cut.

Active travel We have given detailed responses to the South Hams Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan proposals but have not received information on the outcome of this exercise.

Linda Durman, Chair YEG