

INSTOW PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Instow Parish Council
On Thursday 15 January 2026
Held in All-Saints Chapel Down Rd, Instow, EX39 4JU

Present

Chris Hopkins, Paula Lopez, Mary Jane Scott (Chair).

In attendance

Jo-Ann Middleton Clerk.

Members of the public

Two

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:00

268/0126 Apologies for Absence

- a) Eliot Johnson (prior commitment), Nick Arthur (Prior Commitment), Jane Bunclark (Prior Commitment). Mike Foaster (Prior Commitment) Susie McCrum (Prior Commitment)
Resolved to approve these apologies.
- b) Apologies were received Dom Yeadon (Personal Circumstances) who had requested a **formal leave of absence for six months for personal reasons**.
Resolved: That a six-month leave of absence be granted, with the situation to be reviewed at the end of that period.
Action: Clerk to record leave of absence in the minutes each month.

269/0126 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda

270/0126 Public Presentation

Two members of the public attended the meeting to discuss agenda item 11(a), relating to reports of speeding through Instow in particular the 20mph Marine Parade. They expressed an interest in establishing a volunteer group to help monitor speeding traffic within the village. Relevant training is available for volunteers. **Action**: An advertisement will be placed in the Parish magazine *Parish News*. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to contact the Parish Clerk on clerk@instowparishcouncil.gov.uk.

271/0126

To Approve the request to vary the order of business

None

Reports - In Person

272/0126 Reports County & Ward Members.

Reports - In Person

District Councillor Report (Becky Coombs)

Clerk circulated to all Cllrs before the meeting via email (12.01.2026)

Updates:

'The Sands' has been in contact with NDC planning department and I believe they are exploring possibilities of submitting a planning application shortly.

Councillor Biederman has had a site meeting with the operator, Christies and the environment agency at **Yelland Jetty (Salvage yard)** It seems this was a productive meeting, and all parties were engaged. Several items are being looked at in regard to the site and Cllr Biederman is waiting feedback before this can be shared. The operator has already taken action to tidy up the site and store items within the compound. For transparency there is no means to stop operations at the site and has a long-established use.

Trade Waste Service:

The County Council has voted to discontinue its trade waste service.

Cost was approximately £65,000 this year and projected to exceed £200,000 next year.

Service is not statutory and was deemed unsustainable.

Officers will work with affected businesses to transition to alternative providers.

Notice period runs until the end of March 2026

Newstead application 79401 is just awaiting the section 106 agreement to be signed off. The officer will then issue the decision notice.

Local Government Reorganisation

As you are all no doubt aware, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is taking place in Devon which will see the current two-tier system of district and county councils abolished and replaced by unitary authorities. We won't know what the geography of the new authorities will look like until the summer of 2026 but a number of parish and town councils have come forward and have asked whether particular assets could be transferred to parish and town councils in advance of the new authorities being created.

Whether assets held by the District Council do transfer or not will be a decision for members and in taking that decision they will need to balance a range of considerations, including the need to ensure that the new authority is financially viable and sustainable. Having said that, if your parish or town council is of the view that your local communities would be better served by an asset being transferred to it, then now is the time to come forward and submit a request.

In making a request, I would ask you to bear in mind the following guidelines: -

1. Income generating assets such as car parks are generally not likely to be transferred unless there are very strong reasons for doing so,
2. Community assets such as open space, parks, public conveniences might potentially be available to transfer,
3. Assets intended to cross subsidise revenue costs to maintain other community assets will not be transferred,
4. Parish and Town Councils must pay the costs of the transfer,
5. Any request for a transfer must be accompanied by a reasoned justification outlining the reasons why a transfer is desired at this stage, how the community will benefit from a transfer and setting out the implications on the community of the potential transfer e.g.: any necessary increase in the precept levied,
6. Any requests for a transfer must be submitted by Thursday 12 February 2026.

It should also be pointed out that at some stage in the LGR process, a s24 direction will be issued. The effect of this will be to require the District Council to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State to any land transfer of a value of £100k or more. That direction is likely to

be issued in around September 2026 and so, although individual community assets are not likely to exceed that value, any transfer should aim to be completed by that date. It must be emphasised that by inviting expressions of interest, the Council is not committing to undertake particular transfers. This is simply about gauging interest and the Council can then consider the implications flowing from those requests, including the impact on the resources of the Council in undertaking any transfers. Any request should be submitted to Jon Triggs at jon.triggs@northdevon.gov.uk by Thursday 12 February.

County Councillor's Report (Cllr Frank Biederman)

Cllr Biederman delivered an update on several matters:

Asset Transfer (Local Government Reorganisation):

Guidance has been circulated regarding potential asset transfers to parish councils.

Car parks may be challenging due to revenue considerations.

Parish councils are encouraged to submit a clear business case demonstrating community benefit.

Yellow 20 / Beach Compound Matters:

A recent multi-party meeting was described as productive.

Materials have largely been reinstated in the compound.

Further updates will be provided when available.

Car Parking and Traffic Issues:

Ongoing concerns regarding congestion and parking pressures were noted.

The County Council parking review is approximately halfway through its schedule.

Budgets:

The County Council now has a three-year budget settlement, improving forward planning. The largest budget pressures remain within Children's Services and Social Care.

Libraries Consultation:

Clarification was provided that a building is only defined as a library when staffed by a librarian.

Consultation focuses on reducing librarian hours while potentially keeping buildings open as community hubs.

The Community Speed Watch scheme was discussed (*see 270/0126 Public Presentation*)

Cllr. Biederman advised Lovacott are underway with a Community Speed watch and suggested the members of public who attended the meeting get in contact, maybe to help each other.

Hut in Instow Recreation ground ref the future of building, after a long discussion it was suggested to ask for help. The member of the public who attend the meeting will contact Petroc college, and report back to Cllr. Biederman & the Clark at IPC. Cllr. Hopkins will approach the previous contact who helped with the original construction and report to IPC Clerk.

273/0126 Minutes of the Meeting for Instow Parish Council

Council resolved to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 December 2025, the Chair was authorised to sign these as a correct record.

274/0126

Any matters arising from the minutes.

a) IPC purchase of a memorial Bench:

Delivery scheduled for week commencing **17 February**. Exact delivery date to be confirmed. Memorial to be delivered to the Chair's address.

b) Repair of Gate & Beach Notice Installation:

Cllr. Hopkins to repair gate by end of January '26
Installation of sign to be installed 26/27 January

c) Beach Safety Bollard Erection:

Council has not received any response from the Environment Agency despite follow-up. Members agreed the Council should remain proactive. **Action:** Cllr Hopkins & Clerk to obtain quotations and forward to Cllrs. then forward to E.A for approval within 5 working days and install.

d) Defibrillator– Clerk Chase for confirmed delivery date: Expectation 19 - 31January 2026

275/0126

Bus Shelters

Two quotes discussed for repairable on two bus stops. Cllr Hopkins & the Clerk to obtain one more quote each and circulate all quotes to Cllrs before next meeting. (19.02.2026)

Committee Minutes

None

276/0126

Tracker update

Reviewed progress on open actions on publicly discussed matters.

a) Repair of Gate & Beach Notice Installation: As noted in **274/0126 (b)**

Cllr. Hopkins to repair gate by end of January '26
Installation of sign to be installed 26/27 January

b) Notice Board – Due to manufacture issues Ordered from new company **Action: Clerk to confirm delivery date.**

277/0126

Correspondence

The Community Speed Watch scheme was discussed (*see 270/0126 Public Presentation*)

a) Operates on a volunteer basis with police support and training. Focus areas include 20mph zones, Ring Parade, corners, bus stops and car parks. Minimum of four volunteers required per session, including evening monitoring.

Action: An advertisement will be placed in the Parish magazine *Parish News*. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to contact the Parish Clerk on clerk@instowparishcouncil.gov.uk.

b) Instow beach cleans for 2026 are noted in Parish magazine *Parish News* each month.

278/0126

Planning Applications.

Emailed for consultation with councillors due to consultation end date before Council meeting, Clerk responded to NDC accordingly. (For ratification, approved via email).

81109 at 1 Lyndale Terrace Anstey Way Instow

Concerns were raised regarding a proposed balcony overlooking neighbouring property and loss of privacy.

279/0126

Agar Assertion 10

Relevant governance training requirements were noted, for the Clerk and one contractor. Clerk confirmed The Council will use .gov domain email address. If any Cllr needs help contact the Clerk, setting up, new email address for use. It is paramount this is the only email Cllrs. use for council work and correspondence.

It was noted that: Website management arrangements are in place

Action: Clerk and Cllr Lopez to update and set up.

The IT Policy and Data Protection Policy require review and updating in line with current guidance.

280/0126

Emergency Plan Update

Resolved:

That expenditure **up to £400** be authorised for printing and envelope costs associated with the Emergency Plan questionnaire, to avoid delay between meetings. Cllrs Hopkins to obtain quotes. Cllrs Lopez confirmed to Cllrs Hopkins that she would be available to help if required.

i. Payment of Accounts. Approved as per minute 281/0126

ii. Payments of Accounts

Council resolved to authorise the payments specified in the Clerks finance sheet and reproduced below

		Finance - 11 December 2025 - 09 January 2026 Invoices & Credits					
Ref Number Internal	Statutory Power	Payment now due & Description	Notes	Net Cost (£)	VAT (£)	Sub Total (£)	Total
1	LGA 1972 s111 & s.112	North Devon Council (SD11644143) – Staff costs Salary (remuneration national increase from NALC. Council confirmed back pay from April 2025 and the 3.15 % increase approved November 246/1125 (c))	Admin Charge (incl.)	£0.00	£1.29	£0.00	£ 1,457.05
2	LGA 1972 s111	Clerks Monthly Expense See attached breakdown					£ 50.00
3	LGA 1972 s111 & s.112	Clerks Holiday Pay See attached breakdown					£ 1,129.02
4	LGA 1972 Section 135	Paul Fletcher – Pavement Cleaning January 2026 19hrs					£ 231.99
5	LGA 1972 (Misc. Prov.) Act 1957, s4 & Act 1953, s4	Julie Braddick – Toilet Block, 10 Bus shelters incl. cleaning materials					£ 836.80
6	Local Government (Misc. Prov.) Act 1953, s4 Adt 1953, s4	Peter Parker & Sons S – 6 Bus Stop frames and glass cleaning					£ 90.00
7	LGA 1972 Section 137	Flowbird (UI00021957) Airtime and transaction charges		£ 84.21	£ 16.84		£ 101.05
8		PKF Little Johns LLP Agar invoice		£ 315.00	£ 63.00		£ 378.00
9		WesternWeb Ltd Renewal of Cloud email accounts Instow Parish Council Clerk and Councils for period 6/2/26 - 5/2/27		£ 72.00	£ 14.40		£ 86.40
		Total		£ 84.21	£ 18.13	£ -	£ 4,360.31
Ref Number Internal	Statutory Power	Direct Debits Already Paid	Notes	Net Cost (£)	VAT (£)	Sub Total (£)	Total
	LGA 1972 Section 137	AIMBS Payment for car park transactions					£ 77.74
	Pensions Adt 2008	Nest (Clerk)					£ 72.03
	BSCS LGA 1972 s111	Bank Charges					£ 8.65
		Total					£ 158.42
		Total Outgoings					£ 6,488.73
		Grants To be ratified. Authorised and paid through emails after December 2025 IPC meeting <i>Grants Authorise in Dec 2024 budget</i>					
	Grant	INSTOW PCC				£ 820.00	£ 820.00
	Grant	ALL SAINTS COMMUNITY CHAPEL				£ 210.00	£ 210.00
	Grant	PARISH MAGAZINE				£ 530.00	£ 530.00
	Grant	INSTOW PARISH HALL				£ 410.00	£ 410.00
							£ 1,970.00
		Monies In					
	LGA 1972 Section 137	Car Park Card Payments > 12.12.2025					£ 3,865.80
	LGA 1972 Section 137	Car Park Cash >12.12.2025					£ 1,686.32
		Total					£ 5,552.12
		Bank Accounts					
		Treasurers/ Community					£ 87,286.54
		Business					£ 8,715.61
		Deposit & Investment					£ 55,379.25

- a)** Invoices for approval and payment Finance sheet 1 **Council Approved**
- b)** Ratification of Grant payments made after the last meeting (11/12/2025) Finance sheet 1 **Council approved.**
- c)** The Clerk advised when applying for a Grant from the Parish Council a completed grant form, should be completed. Available on the Council web site. **Action:** Clerk **Noted:** Members noted the timing of annual grant payments to allow recipient organisations to meet year-end accounting requirements
- d) Payments**

A VAT payment to HMRC of **£1,668.66** was noted. **Resolved:**
That the payment be ratified at the next meeting (19.02.2026)

282/0126

Chairs Communication

To approve the annual volunteer thank you party usually held at the Commodore Hotel in February, date to be set. (Once date is confirmed Clerk to send Invites and circulate delegates once accepted to all Cllrs).

283/0126

Beach Safety

To remind councillors walking the beach to report back to the Clerk so this can be recorded.

284/0126

Any other Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

- a)** Allocation of Christmas Carol charity funds
- b)** Review of committee arrangements
- c)** Monitoring of outstanding action points

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings will take place in **2026** on **3rd Thursday of each month (except December 2026 meeting which is one week earlier)**

February 19, March 19, April 16.

Annual Parish Meeting & Instow Parish Council Meeting including the AGM
Thursday 21 May 2026

Note (a)

February meetings will move to The All-Saints Chapel due to work at Instow Village Hall for the 'go green project'

Note (b) No meeting in August

The Meeting closed at 20:46

Signed..... Date2026