

**Minutes of Instow Annual Parish Meeting held at Instow Village Hall on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026 at 7.00 pm**

**Attendees** – Councillors Arthur, Bunclark, Hopkins, Johnson, Lopez and Scott.  
NDC Councillor Coombs.  
Locum Parish Clerk- M. Isaac and five members of the public.

**Apologies** – Councillors Foster, Mcrum and Yeadon and DCC Councillor Biederman due to personal commitments.

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

Reports from Village.

Appendix 1.

1. Chairmans Speech– delivered by Chair MJ Scott
2. Chairmans Financial Report delivered by Chair MJ Scott
3. Village Hall – delivered by Jo Holman
4. Instow Sand and Flood Action Group (ISFAG) Delivered by Carolyn Maynard
5. Parish Church – delivered by MJ Scott
6. Twinning Association – delivered by Carolyn Maynard
7. Instow School – Delivered by Alan Mackie
8. North Devon Yacht Club – Delivered by Jane Bunclark
9. All Saints Chaple and Community Centre – delivered by Mary Jane Scott
10. Parish News Magazine – delivered by Mary Jane Scott
11. Women’s Institute – delivered by Lenice Foreman
12. Buck’s Meadow Orchard – delivered by Mary Jane Scott

The following organisation and groups were also invited to attend the meeting and submit a report. Ferry Company and Cricket Club.

Parishioners Questions:

A Parishioner stated that she had problems with sand blowing into her garden. Do Christie Estates have a responsibility for sand blowing into her garden? Councillor Johnson stated that it was classed as an act of God and Christies didn’t own the sand. The area was an SSSI and Christies had contributed to 50% of the cost of cleaning up the sand last year.

A Parishioner thanked Councillor Arthur for his assistance in dealing with the sand problems.

A questions was asked regarding the provision of Electric Charging Point in the Car Park. Councillor Foster stated that the Council was pursuing the provision of electric charging points but at present there was no electricity supply in the car park and he was awaiting further information.

Concern was expressed regarding the condition of the toilets. The front of the disabled toilet door was in a poor condition and ivy was growing through the window. The Ladies toilets were clean but the gents toilets were stinking and had no paper towels.

The meeting ended at 19.45 p.m.

## **Instow Parish Council Annual Chairs Report**

21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

I would like to express our thanks to the District Councillor Becky Coombs, and also county councillor Frand Biederman for attending our meetings to bring the Parish up to date on all local matters and for helping represent our interests at the various councils. Your contribution is always of immense value and is much appreciated.

I would also like to thank all our regular contractors for the work they do – Dave Budd, Julie Braddick, Michael Williams, Dave Piper, Paul Fletcher, Miranda Lloyd and Jennifer Keilly.

I would also like to thank our internal auditor, James Hellyer, for all his help, and the Marines for all their help in clearing and moving sand.

Now for the important bits – key achievements & initiatives ..... Instow Parish Council has had another busy year

- Chris Hopkins and Dom Yeadon have been working together on the emergency plan
- Chris Hopkins and Eliot Johnson have been hard at work co-ordinating the work on the beach, in particular with the Marines.
- The council have paid for the installation of two defibrillators, which hopefully will soon be operational
- In addition to the regular grants towards essential village organisations we gave a large grant for the Village Hall going green project
- Along with Becky Combs we pursued NDC regarding planning permission at the Sands Care Home, which is now nearly close to submission – only awaiting the bat report
- Nick Arthur, Eliot Johnson and myself have been working together on a submission for NDC for us to keep the car park as a village asset
- Some progress is being made in having a village wide car parking scheme
- Slow progress is being made to introduce a byelaw regarding boats anchored on the beach
- Our trustees on the Litchardon Cross committee have managed to agree an excellent deal for Instow, and the first grants from this project are being paid out
- We have installed solar lights in the car park for the toilets and machine

I would like to thank all the Instow Parish Councillors, who work hard all year around for the benefit of the Community and give up their valuable time freely to do ensure that Instow Parish gets the very best attention it can get, under sometimes very challenging situations.

**INSTOW VILLAGE HALL**  
**Registered Charity No. 300873**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026**

Correspondence address:  
5 Lighthouse View, Anstey Way,  
Instow, Bideford, Devon, EX39 4FY

**Trustees**

The Instow Village Hall trustee board is made up of representatives appointed by regular user groups and elected members of the public (MOP). Trustees at the date of approval of this Report are:

Chair - Sheila Moores (Community on Show)  
Vice Chair- Vacant  
Treasurer –Rachel Stenton (WI)  
Secretary – Jo Holman (MOP)  
Letting Officer - Carolyn Maynard (Twinning)  
Health & Safety Officer – Anne Thorn (St John the Baptist Parish Church)  
Regeneration & Events – Patricia Lancaster (MOP)  
Mike Foster (Parish Council)  
Susie McCrum (Parish Council)  
David Cartwright (MOP)  
Wendy Allen (MOP)

Others who served as trustees during the year ended 31 March 2026 were:  
Brian Moores, Retired as Chair (MOP) July 2025

Instow Parish Council is custodial trustee of the Charity and owns the freehold of the Village Hall.

**Governance**

The Village Hall, which is located in Quay Lane, Instow, Devon, was donated to the parishioners of Instow in 1969 for community use, and the conveyance forms the governing document.

The Charity has responsibility for the management of the Hall, and all revenue and expenditure relating to the use of the Hall is included in the accompanying accounts.

**Objectives and activities**

The conveyance to the parishioners includes the covenant that the Hall is 'to be held upon trust for the purposes of a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants and neighbourhood without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions and in particular for use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the life for the said inhabitants.'

The Hall is regarded within the village of Instow as a valuable community facility. It is let to users on commercial terms and is used for a wide variety of purposes, including sports and leisure activities, social events, and meetings and it is also used for a variety of events organised by the trustees.

The Trustees have complied with the duty in the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to guidance on the public benefit requirement.

### **Achievements and performance**

2025/26 continued to be a busy year for Instow Village Hall. Consolidating its role in the Community, with the embedding of the Community Hub/ Library & Chatty café, now held weekly on Friday Mornings.

Numerous fundraising events including our wonderful May Ball held at Tapely Park were widely supported and this event alone raised over 5k for North Devon Hospice.

Our increased bookings include weekly Yoga, Pilates & Keep fit groups, plus regular Sound Bath events establishing a wellness hub in the Village.

We hosted various art exhibitions and are please to say these will continue in 2026.

Instow Community on Show 2025 was held in August, with a fantastic day of events in the hall, displays of home-grown fruit & veg, homemade produce, art from Instow School and a wonderful café run by the WI. Activities on the beach, including a dog show, live music & food stalls attracted locals and tourists alike.

Our “Go Green” project, gained momentum after much hard work, securing grants & supported by IPC. The GG project was designed to future proof the Hall and reduce our carbon footprint. We installed solar panels to generate our own electricity, installed a more eco-friendly heating system & solar Velux roof lights. It was also re-decorated internally & new roof insulation completed. To facilitate this the hall was closed for 2 months in Jan & Feb 2026.

The trustees are very grateful for the support received throughout the closure and our regular hirers been so accommodating to allow for this much needed refurbishment.

Alongside the Trustees we have a dedicated group of Volunteers who support our events, giving up their time & expertise, and to show our appreciation we held another Christmas “Thank You” event in December.

### **Financial review**

Largely as a result of money-raising events held by the trustees, and grant funding received the Charity’s cash funds increased in the year from £52,137 to £91,865. A restricted fund was established in the previous year named the Save Our Hall fund, which, at 31 March 2026, held £30,836.

A more detailed breakdown is in our Annual Accounts, which are also available to view on the Charities Commission website.

Report approved by the trustees and signed by the Chairman on their behalf:

## **Instow Sands Action Group**

A couple of years ago with increasing frustration at the lack of action to do something about the state of the beach and Marine Parade a number of us got together to try to get something done. We distributed petition forms around Instow and in addition to having the support of many signatories we also had over 50 locals who wanted to be volunteers and help.

Jacquie Poole and I took the lead and had a very positive meeting with Andrew Wollacott of Christie's Devon Estate which included with him agreeing to request for a licence from Natural England to move sand from by the wall to along in front of the dunes on the way towards the cricket ground. Unfortunately for us Natural England control what can be done on the beach and after the latest failed experiment from 2020 had done nothing to remove sand to below the rain water outlets resulting in large quantities of sand ending up on the road and flooding every time there was heavy rainfall. We are aware that the situation is further complicated by the number of bodies that have an interest or duty. It was likely to be expensive to do the whole job but some work was done at the Boathouse end with free input from the Marines.

Late in 2024 there was a very strong storm which resulted in large quantities of sand moving inland. This meant that the road and pavement were inundated and with nothing being done was even featured on Spotlight news. Various bits of work were done on an emergency basis but still getting the sand level down all the way along wasn't done. As has been proved both historically and more recently the only way to minimise the sand getting on to the road is to keep the level at least 6 feet below the top of wall. The hope that high tides would do some of this have not really materialised. The sand level is now so high that even Spring tides get nowhere near the wall. In the meantime the ISAG volunteers meet once a month to do what they can to clear the pavements to make it safer for everyone to walk and also improve the scruffy areas around where weeds had started to grow in the gullies filled with sand. Inevitably some of what we do is undone the next time it is windy but it is a positive experience especially as we finish up at the Wayfarer or now The Glorious Oyster for coffee and bacon sandwiches. An opportunity for us to get to know each other and encourage community spirit. In future I hope that we can turn our focus on all areas of the village which need help.

After a successful well attended meeting at the Commodore in early March it was agreed to set up Instow Sands Community Interest Company and this is going ahead. This will not only give us a formal status but also allow us to apply for grants to finance clearance. Three directors have volunteered and there has been input from a resident familiar with the steps which have to be taken. As always finance lies behind what can be done and sadly repeated requests to the Parish Council to use some of their substantial reserves to expedite what needs to be carried out has met with refusal. Responsibility for management of the sand area is shared between CDE and IPC and while wishing to help as much as possible the new CIC cannot be expected to just take over the work. We are working to conform with the extensive procedural requirements set by NE but need IPC as the body nominated in the licence to assist us Also to focus

on what needs to be done now for those who live and work in Instow , not just to submit to being part of long term nature projects. I am sure there have been things going on in the background with the councillors but we can only judge on what we can see.

Going forward we hope that the scheduled help from the Marines early next month plus local volunteers will achieve the first part of what is needed, lowering the sand level all the way along. To take full advantage of what the Marines can do we need to have other equipment We are hoping to have some trailers to transport the sand along to the dumping area. However if we could afford to hire the best machinery such a dumper or blade digger to use as well 2 days work could transform things so once again I ask for financial help. You have substantial reserves in the bank. If £10,000 was available to draw on this could go a long way to get the first stage done. Stage one will need to be followed by regular maintenance on a new licence as we all know that it is not a single operation but dependant as always on what nature has in store. I am confident we can raise money to be used to help with this. However it will be difficult to get contributions while the Council is holding such a substantial amount in the bank. Focus on what we need now and deal with the carpark in a few years time.

Here in Instow we do not have a village green but instead the beach and adjacent road acts as our focus point and it needs to be something we can all be proud of.

## **Instow Church**

Instow has two Church of England centres for worship: the church of St John the Baptist on the hill above the village, and All Saints Chapel and Community Centre (ASCCC) on Anstey Way. There is a church room opposite St John's and a children's play area/garden of ease beside ASCCC. St Johns is open every day from (approximately) 10.30-1700.

We are part of the Taw and Torridge Estuary Churches (TTEC) which comprises Instow, Westleigh, and Fremington.

Our Rector, the Rev Chris Painter, who is also Rural Dean of Barnstaple and Chaplain to the High Sheriff of Devon, leads the TTEC team, supported by our Curate, the Rev James Moore, who is to be ordained in June, along with Steve Painting and Brenda Jacobs plus a wonderful group of lay staff. There are bi-weekly communion services at 9.30 at Instow. These are regularly attended by a committed congregation of around 15. The congregations swell significantly for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We are an active church, supporting the Monday coffee-and-cake-and-a-chat drop-in led by the ASCCC committee, and we run a number of events every year to raise money for the church and for our nominated charity, North Devon Against Domestic Abuse (NDADA). These events include:

June: Gift Day

Instow on Show: August

Historic Churches Day: 12 September 2026

Harvest Lunch: October

Autumn Fair: November

Christmas Carols at the Commodore: December

Jumble Sale: March

In addition, Chris is organising a music festival to be held at the TTEC churches from 19-21 June this year.

We are currently working to extend the churchyard as capacity is getting close (everyone wants to be buried in our 'church with a view'). We are working with CDE (Christie Devon Estates) and other agencies to achieve this time-consuming and complicated process.

Other projects this year have included setting up a card reader in St John's in the hope of attracting donations to support our work; creation of a displays on our new notice boards about NDADA and about the lives of our War Dead, and the Forth Road Bridge of ongoing maintenance. This includes work post-storms, to St John's roof and other parts of the ancient building. We had hoped to be able to repaint the interior, but the enormous cost (we have to strip out all the flaky and inappropriate vinyl paint first, then

use expensive lime render-friendly paint instead), and limited funds have precluded this.

The exterior of ASCCC has been repainted and the playground received its annual inspection by ROSPA.

Huge thanks to all those who give their time on the PCC to keep the church going. Particular thanks to Mrs Pam Cattle, who, at nearly 91, has just stepped back from being Parish Secretary after innumerable years and inordinate amounts of effort and expertise.

### **Instow Twinning Association**

Instow Twinning Association continues to maintain long established friendships with the community in Arromanches

In September 2025 a party from Instow Twinning Association were guests to wonderful hospitality, generosity and kindness in Normandy. We presented our friends in Arromanches with a beautiful pennant, kindly made by a friend in a neighbouring Twinning Association. This gift marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Our AGM was on Tuesday 11th November at 7pm at NDYC, followed by election of officers. Thank you to the NDYC for their continued support in being able to use the beautiful club venue for various functions.

The committee works hard throughout the year to provide reciprocal hospitality to our French guests. We appreciate the support of the community of Instow. We held our popular spring lunch in March. 'A Taste of Twinning' with complimentary French wine and cheese, to tempt anyone who wants to find out more about our organisation, is planned May 27th 6pm at All Saints Chapel.

Long lasting friendships and the close bond between communities seems very important to continue.

Thank you to the Council and individual officers for your continued support.

Mary Fisher:

Secretary to Instow Twinning Association

Contact: [Instowtwinning@btinternet.com](mailto:Instowtwinning@btinternet.com)

Tele: Carolyn Maynard, Treasurer 01271 860061

## **Report from Instow Community Primary and Pre-School**

I'm pleased to report that Instow Community Primary School remains a popular and successful school. Despite a national decline in birth rates, our school has retained healthy numbers. The predictions from Devon County for reception intakes reflected the fall in birth rates, however, we have managed to exceed these most years. Our number on roll currently stands at 136 (PAN = 140) and will stay at that next academic year.

Our pupils mainly come from Yelland, Fremington and Bideford with fewer families living in Instow Village.

### **Staffing**

Our staffing remains stable. There have been a couple of longstanding staff members who have retired (Mrs L Turner and Mrs P Harvest). As a result, we have employed a new SENDco and Part time teacher in Class 5. We currently have 7 class teachers and 7 teaching assistants. In preschool we have 3 L3 trained members of staff.

### **Premises**

As councillors probably know, our new reception classroom allowed us to bring Preschool to the school site, and this helped preschool numbers to stay healthy. Most of our preschool children go on to attend Instow Primary and it makes transition very easy for the children. We are hoping to lower the age range of school at the end of this year so the preschool will be part of school rather than governor run. The staff has worked hard to ensure the provision is effective and supports the holistic development and progress of the pupils.

Devon County Council have just finished resurfacing the bottom pitch and we have cleared the land at the back of the playground which we intend to use to enhance the curriculum.

### **Achievement**

Our pupils continue to achieve well.

Reading; Writing and Maths combined scores, Instow achieved 72% (outperforming both local and national data). Reading remains a strength across school and Instow is at least in line with national expectations, often exceeding them.

Phonics screener 88% (national 80%)

Early Years - GLD (good level of development) 75%

### **Looking at Our Community links**

We hold our annual sports day at the Cricket Club

The school takes part in the annual sailing taster day with Y6 attending.

Class 2 have incorporated Instow history into their curriculum and Pam Cattle came in to talk to the older children about her memories linked to WWII study.

We hold several services at the church including Harvest, Christingle and Easter.

Instow school contributes to 'Community on Show' showcasing a range of work and many of our families take part.

### **ACCT**

Instow Primary continues to be part of the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Trust group. The number of schools in this group has decreased - the remaining schools are Appledore, The Village Partnership (Woolsery, Parkham and Buckland Brewer) and Hartland. This is a supportive Trust that holds sporting activities, working groups for teachers and headteachers, and training opportunities.

### **OFSTED**

The last OFSTED was on 04 May 2023 and Instow was given a grading of 'good'. The curriculum was an area of development which has been the focus of our school improvement alongside implementing the new approach to inclusion. The next OFSTED is anticipated to be in May 2027.

However, we are increasingly concerned that at a time when the birth rate is declining; costs are escalating and the state of a building that was first used as a school in 1888, we are facing very challenging times. We have held high level meetings with a government minister and with Devon County education officials, both with the support and backing of our MP and County Councillor, to raise our concerns and seek support to offer our staff and pupils the facilities that they all deserve and are comparable with neighbouring schools.

Despite this picture, we are very proud of the continued success of our school which is due to the leadership of our school, the commitment and hard work of both staff and pupils, the support of parents and carers, and the commitment of our team of dedicated governors.

Read by Alan Mackie

## **All Saints Chapel and Community Centre 2026**

The `Drop in` coffee mornings are well attended, averaging around 15 people giving a friendly, chatty atmosphere.

It was decided before the winter programme of lunches began last year, that numbers for lunch were so low it was unviable, but also probably unnecessary. Those who previously benefited from a lunch being provided had either moved on or no longer attended. It wasn't an easy decision, but all things considered, volunteer commitment particularly, shopping, cooking and attending the Monday morning, plus lack of numbers made it the right decision. We now have a vibrant attendance with coffee and delicious home made cake, for a shorter period of time, which works well for everyone.

Thanks to Jenny our Treasurer for managing the finances, our regular bookings for renting the Chapel are also doing well, Story Bears has increased its numbers significantly, Pilates and the very popular chair Pilates, there is a waiting list, Creative Writing, WI Craft club and Church services, this is slightly offset by single bookings being down this year. The expenses and receipts are closely balanced but we have a healthy bank balance which is good security for future capital expenses.

Annie continues to oversee the garden and keeps it in good order, Michael cuts the grass and keeps the stream clear on a regular basis, and the play area is inspected by ROSPA annually.

Thanks to our regular volunteers and the support we receive from the community.

Sheila

Secretary

## **PARISH NEWS REPORT. May 19th 2026**

1160 copies of the Parish News are collected every month from the Printers at the Ice Factory in Barnstaple.

They are then packed ready for 36 volunteers who distribute them to properties in Instow, Westleigh and West Yelland.

We are very grateful to everyone who volunteers to make this happen, including our Editor Colin and Treasurer Max.

We manage to keep solvent with advertising revenue, grants from Instow and Westleigh Parish Councils, donations from the RNLI, Instow Twinning, Westleigh Village Hall, Instow Village Hall, Bideford Music Club, Instow and Yelland W.I., Torridge Walk and Talk, All Saints Chapel, and donations from readers of the magazine. Income last year was £8658, with a small surplus of £57.

There is an on-line colour copy which can be accessed.

Anne Thorn

## **Instow and Yelland WI Annual report 2026**

2025 was the 50th Anniversary of the Instow and Yelland WI, it was believed to have met first in the summer of 1975 and we are fortunate to have some of the founder members still among our membership.

We held a number of special activities to celebrate our anniversary throughout the year including an afternoon tea with Ann Widecombe and a garden party in the grounds of All Saints Chapel where we dedicated a commemorative garden bench. We are planning to round off our anniversary this year with burying a time capsule in the chapel gardens to be opened in 50 years' time.

We meet in Instow Village Hall on the first Thursday in the month, with the exception of August, and welcome visitors and potential new members to experience our group. We are part of the Devon Federation of Women's Institutes (WI) and affiliated to the National Federation of WI. We have a ten strong committee headed by Tricia Morris as President and Rachel Stenton as Treasurer. Each member of the committee plays a role and the pooling of different talents contributes towards a strong and vibrant group.

The average monthly attendance at our meetings is 45 and along with the speaker, we have a business meeting and a social gathering which includes regular second-hand book sales together with the Flower of the Month competition where we raise funds to donate to the

Associated Country Women of the World Charity. In addition, we always nominate and fundraise for a local charity of the year and for 2025 it was the Devon Air Ambulance. In 2025 we also made a donation to the Instow Village Hall Go Green Fund and we make an annual donation towards the running costs of the Parish magazine.

Throughout the year, our members enjoyed a wide range of speakers including representatives from local charities including the RNLI and North Devon Wave Project, a local gin distillery, silk scarf painting, local historians and authors

Our year started with a New Year's lunch at the Commodore Hotel, Instow and our activity groups of Games, Crafts, Walking, Gardening, Books and Lunch clubs met regularly and participated in a wide variety of activities and experiences. During the year members enjoyed various excursions including the garden festival at Powderham Castle, garden visits to Rosemoor, Clovelly Court and to our members gardens in Fremington, a day excursion to Topsham via Dart's Farm, and a splendid Christmas lunch at the Imperial Hotel, Barnstaple. Also, in December several members performed as part of the WI choir at the annual Carol Service at Exeter Cathedral. The year's meetings were rounded off with an enjoyable Christmas Party hosted by the Committee.

Throughout the year we have continued to maintain our profile and involvement in our local communities. Gardening club members have maintained 5 of the flower beds on Instow Marine Parade and have decorated them to mark various national events and holidays. Last year it included VE day as well as observing the November Remembrance commemorations and we had a special display to mark our 50th Anniversary. Members have also supported a tidy up at the Lagoon View Community Orchard, Yelland. In August we provided refreshments, lunches and afternoon teas for the Instow Community on Show event and a number of members have supported other community fundraising events.

Read by Lenice Forman

# BUCK'S MEADOW ORCHARD

The project was born out of a partnership between North Devon Biosphere Service, Instow in Bloom and local volunteers. The name of the orchard derives from land leased by George Buck, a merchant who died in 1743 ( see “Instow a History” ).

A mixture of fruit and nut trees have been planted and include varieties of the local cherry – Mazzard, Oaken Pin apple which was once common on Exmoor and the Exe valley, and Tidicombe Seedling originating from Arlington.

The orchard was planted over 12 years ago and the trees are now mature. A few have failed and have been replaced through the generosity of villagers. One Mazzard has been removed as it had become too big and was shading out adjacent trees – however there are still 3 remaining. A professional pruner has been hired to help this season. Thanks to Instow Parish Council for finance and Devon County Council for felling and removing tree.

The orchard has proved to be an asset to the village and an interest to both locals and visitors.

A wish list would include a new bridge at the same level as the Trail and orchard to ease access and a professional notice board to replace the “home made” one.

Mike Glover  
May 2026