



# Coffinswell Parish Council

Serving the Communities of  
Coffinswell & Dacombe

The Cirl Bunting is the UK's rarest farmland bird. The entire breeding population is found between Exeter and Plymouth.

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## MINUTES OF THE COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026 7PM AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

**Present:** Cllr N Orchard (Chair), Cllr S Avery (Vice Chair), Cllr C Bell, Cllr M Atkinson,

**In attendance:** Mrs L Moore – Parish Clerk  
No public in attendance

1. The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00pm, welcoming everyone in attendance and received apologies from DCC Heather Horner, Cllr S Spokes and Cllr E Barnard.
2. **To declare any interests arising at this meeting.**  
None
3. **Reports:**
  - 3.1 **County Councillors' report.**  
DCC Horner was unable to attend and submitted a report in advance of the Meeting. The Chair summarised that Devon County Council's services—such as roads, public transport, health and social care, planning, and environmental issues—are under ongoing pressure and underfunded. DCC Cllr Horner plans to advocate for fairer rural funding, better communication with Parish Councils, and stronger accountability in service delivery.
  - 3.2 **District Councillors' report.**  
**Not in attendance**
  - 3.3 **Police Advocate and Neighbourhood Watch reports and updates.**  
The Chair advised the Council that following District Cllr Taylor's report on the potential closure of Torquay Custody Centre, a letter was sent to the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner expressing concern. It has now been confirmed that the Custody Centre will remain open. He advised that there were no other updates on police nor Neighbourhood Watch matters.
4. **Approval to consider, amend as agreed by the Council and approve the minutes of the following meeting:**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025, were approved without objection. (Proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Atkinson).

## **5 Finance**

**5.1** It was agreed by all to approve the payments schedule.

**5.2** It was agreed by all to approve the Bank Reconciliation for the months of November and December 2025.

**5.3** The budget update for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was presented. The Chair reported that the budget is on track, with a slight underspend expected in the revenue budget. The P3 budget may have a small carry-over to next year, and the CIL budget is mostly spent within the five-year period, leaving around £80 unspent. Comments on this year's budget were invited, and it was agreed that all was acceptable.

### **5.4 To discuss and agree the Chairman's report, budget and precept for 2026 – 2027.**

The Chair referred to his Budget report which was previously circulated to the Councillors regarding the proposed Precept for 2026-2027, with a 3.2% increase raising the Precept to £7002.00 – there were no changes suggested. Cllr Atkinson proposed and Cllr Avery seconded the motion that the Parish Clerk should submit the request for £7002.00.

### **5.5 Bank Deposit Account**

The Chair informed those present that the Parish is due to receive a £20,000 payment from the Solar Farm developers once it is operational. He advised that consideration had been given to creating a formal Community Benefit Fund but decided this would be unnecessarily bureaucratic for a single, relatively small sum. Following the example of Harberton Parish Council, the funds will be incorporated into the Parish accounts.

He informed the Council that a new savings account (Commercial Instant Access Account) has now been opened with Lloyd's Bank to maximise interest, and an initial £500 transferred from the Community Current Account. Discussion followed regarding the proposed suggestion to reduce the latter's account balance to around £2,000 and transfer the remainder into the new account. Councillors duly approved this approach for managing the accounts as funds can be moved instantly between accounts as needed.

## **6 Funding & Grants:**

None

## **7. Footpaths & Highways:**

Two road closures were noted:

- Dacombe Cross will be closed from 26 January to 27 February for a second attempt at clearing an oil spill.
- Willowpark Lane (Greenacres to Fluder Hill) was closed on 20 January for pothole repairs, although notice of the closure was very short.

Cllr Avery reported that there was an issue concerning fly tipping at the top of Dacombe Hill at the field gate entrance where a burnt-out car is in the layby. The Clerk was asked to inform TDC about the matter.

The Chair reported that the December closure of St Marychurch Road was managed reasonably well, with minimal disruption from diverted traffic. A litter pick was also carried out along the closed road, with thanks given to volunteers.

A recent cold snap caused icy road conditions, and some grit bins were found to be low. A request was made for the bin near Bartholomew Cottage to be refilled. Volunteers helped spread salt where needed. A suggestion was made to install a new grit bin at the Connybeare Lane T-junction (near Fox Cottage/Periwinkle Cottage), which the Parish Council could potentially fund.

Regarding footpaths, applications for P3 funding for next year have been received and will be completed with Tim Rumball. Suggestions for improvement works are invited from the Councillors and the parishioners.

Discussion followed regarding when the Solar Farm is completed that a new permissive path is expected between Ridgeway Lane and Downaway Lane alongside St Marychurch Road. Fencing appears to be in place, but the developers may not provide signage or access at the Downaway Lane end, and it was noted that the Parish Council may need to fund appropriate signs.

Finally, Devon Highways reported that the gate to the 14 Acre Field permissive path from Connybeare Lane is damaged and asked if the Parish Council would fund a replacement. The landowner indicated it is not urgent. The Chair advised that a cost estimate has been requested but has not yet been received.

## **8. To note any correspondence received**

None.

## **9 Parish Matters:**

### **9.1 Register of Interests – Section 4 (Land and Property)**

The Clerk reported that Teignbridge District Council has requested councillors review Section 4 (Land and Property) of their Register of Interests. The Clerk will check the current councillors individually and will contact them directly if any amendments or additional information are required.

### **9.2 Update regarding Parish Council IT/email requirements.**

The Clerk advised that this is proceeding and completion of the necessary procurement application form is progressing and await confirmation of domain approval and clarification of the website name together with the email addresses.

### **9.3 To receive any further updates on parish matters.**

Clerk advised that awaiting an update but will chase the matter.

The Chair reported that three new noticeboards for the Triangle, purchased using CIL funding, were delivered before Christmas but have not yet been installed due to poor weather and other delays. Installation will take place when weather conditions allow.

An update was also given on water leaking from an inspection cover at the Triangle. A CCTV survey of the pipe found that it is a cast iron pipe, and the blockage is likely caused by rust build-up rather than tree roots from the parish-planted oak tree. Clearing the blockage would require specialist equipment and is estimated to cost around £1,000. As the issue is unlikely to have been caused by the Parish Council, it was suggested that further work should be the responsibility of the pipe owner rather than the Parish Council. The Councillors agreed to this approach.

It was noted that the original CCTV survey quote of £245 + VAT was reduced to £175 + VAT due to limited inspection, although an invoice has not yet been received.

**10 Planning:** - No planning applications nor decisions received for the Parish.

## **11. Correspondence received by the Parish Clerk**

None

**12. Enforcement Issues:**

The Chair reported that work has taken place on the field at the bottom of Pittland Lane, where planning permission for a barn was refused last year. A large amount of earth has been moved to create a flat area, and a smaller blockwork building now appears to be under construction on a nearby levelled area without approval. The Chair visited the site after Christmas, but no one was present. Councillors agreed to keep the matter under review.

**13. General Public Question Time:**

No public in attendance.

**14. To note the date of the next meeting:**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the Meeting which ended at 8.20pm.

Signed:  
Chairman of Coffinswell Parish Council

Dated: