Minutes of the meeting of Molland Parish Council

Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7:30pm in Molland Village Hall

Present R Milton (Chairman), R Thorne (Vice Chairman; arr 7:45pm), Cllrs D Appleby, K Brown, W Dart, B Taylor, S Saxby, C Williams, District Councillor E Bulled, County Councillor R Hopley, and Clerk I Fisher.

128/09/09.1 Apologies for/and Sanction of Absence None.

129/09/09.2 Declaration of Interests Cllr Williams declared an interest in planning application 80714.

130/09/09.3 Representations from the public None.

131/09/09.4 Planning

Code	Details	Type/expiry
80714	**Molland Methodist Church Molland Devon EX36 3NG** Change of use from disused methodist chapel to 3 bedroom dwelling with two storey extension. *Council agreed that this is a positive development for the village and supported the application. Cllr Williams left the room during discussion and voting.*	Full 23/10/25 SUPPORTED

132/09/09.5 Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 20th May 2025. Approved unanimously by those members who had attended the meeting.

133/09/09.6 Clerk's Report on the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 20th May 2025.

Audit The Clerk informed Council that the Audit Exemption has been agreed by the External Auditors.

Bridge at Black Cock Highways have contacted the Estate for permission to assess and move/repair the bridge. Visibility needs to be improved by cutting back vegetation, the Estate owning the Molland side of the river, and probably Station House the other side. Cllr Appleby will talk to the residents in Station House. A simple addition to protecting the bridge would be to change the road markings so that trailers do not swing into the bridge sidings – to be determined once Highways have decided a way forwards.

Public toilet renovation Council thanked District Cllr Bulled for providing a grant of £250 for work to the outside of the public toilets. County Cllr Hopley agreed to an application for £250 for repairs and upgrade to the urinals, which is much appreciated by Council. ***Action*** *Clerk to complete on-line application.*

134/09/09.7 Matters arising from the meeting held on 20th May 2025 not on this agenda Cllr Appleby mentioned that the clock is again not working, after running smoothly since reinstallation. Cllr Taylor explained that the engineer will come to look at it once he is back from his holidays, and the outcome will be brought to the next meeting. Cllr Williams explained that there is currently no interest from anyone to take over the pub, given the economic climate. She will keep the PC updated. There was a general discussion about speed limits in the village, and it was agreed that this would be looked at again after feedback from the North Molton public session to be held tomorrow. County Cllr Hopley indicated that there would be a greater chance of success if the process was self-funded. It was also noted that the Ridge Road is supposed to be closed, but people are ignoring the signs and there is no evidence of resurfacing. Highways have confirmed that this is still going to happen.

135/09/09.8 Items for discussion

a) **Parish Hall update.** *Parish Hall Trustees and Management Committee*: Stuart Mallen stepped down as the Hall Chair and Trustee and Linda Mallen was elected to both posts. Debby Appleby remains a Trustee and Treasurer and Steve Saxby is Secretary. A third Trustee is needed. A committee of active volunteers subsequently met and combined brilliantly with the Church to hold on 24th August a very successful

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Annual Garden and Produce Show. *Land Registration*: first registration of land upon which the village Hall was built remains with HM Land Registry. Slee Blackwell have advised that because it is a first registration the application could take some months to process. However, in the meantime, a letter confirming ownership has been received from SB and this will be used to support Grant funding applications. *Funding Applications*: it continues to prove difficult to obtain three quotes for building repairs to the windows and doors prior to submitting applications for grant funding. Cllr Saxby will approach the original two joiners and window specialists for revised quotes while researching further builders. *Hall improvements*: from Hall funds, six blackout blinds were purchased and installed in order to provide an environment to show films or presentations. The Forestry Commission were the first organisation to make use of this facility. A number of additional tables were purchased and these were used, to great effect, to display the large number of entries to the Garden and Produce Show. The show was also an opportunity to use the Parish Hall online payment card machine for the first time.

b) **Budgets** The Clerk presented the current state of the budget and predicted spend by the end of the year. He will circulate the figures, with discussion of a final budget planned for the November meeting, and potential budgets/costs going forwards for several years.

c) **Grant application form** The Clerk suggested an amendment to the Grant Application form to enable community volunteer groups to apply. The following wording was agreed: *A volunteer group can apply for a grant on the understanding that the activities must benefit the community and cannot benefit individuals. In such cases, a maximum grant value will be agreed by the Parish Council, no greater than £200, and the Clerk will reimburse costs and monitor spend.*

d) **Emergency Planning** Molland does not currently have an Emergency Plan and it was agreed that the Clerk would circulate North Molton PC's as a template, and bring a draft to the next meeting. He will also apply for a grant to cover an emergency box (torches, sandbags, foil blankets etc) to be held in the Village Hall. Cllr Saxby asked about grit for the Snow Warden role, and Cllr Thorne directed him to a stockpile in the village.

e) **Newsletter** The Clerk and Cllr Appleby have drafted a newsletter, which will be circulated to Council. However, it was suggested that it not be sent out before there have been discussions on speeding assessment and potential community involvement.

f) **2026 meeting dates** 13/1, 10/3, 5/5 AGMs, 19/5, 14/7, 8/9, 10/11

136/09/09.9 Chairman's Report/urgent matters brought forward by the Chairman The Chairman thanked Council and the Clerk for bringing Molland onto a more professional footing.

137/09/09.10 Finances

Finances as at 1st September 2025 CURRENT ACCOUNT £2,574.20 RESERVES ACCOUNT £9,000.00

Payments since last meeting

- Clerk salary Apr/May 2025 + reimbursement (£262.15)
- Web monthly costs Apr/May 2025 (2 x £9.99 = £19.98)
- DALC yearly subscription (£116.19, includes £16.19 VAT)
- GRANT to Village Hall (£250.00)
- GRANT to Molland PCC (£150.00)
- GRANT to Village Hall Committee for public toilet maintenance (£450.00)
- Insurance (£343.97)
- HMRC DD July (£84.60)

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Income

- None

Payments requiring approval at this meeting

- Clerk salary Jun 2025 (10 hrs pm @£14.13ph = £113.10 + £28.20 PAYE to DD later)
- Clerk salary Jul 2025 (10 hrs pm @£14.13ph = £112.90 + £28.40 PAYE to DD later)
- Clerk salary Aug 2025 (10hrs pm @£14.59ph = £116.70 + £29.20 PAYE to DD later)
- Clerk salary Sep 2025 + Apr to Jul back pay (10hrs pm @£14.59ph + 4 x £4.60 = £131.50 + £32.80 PAYE to DD later)
- Reimbursement to Clerk for Footpath Warden map (£21.99)

  Note, pay rise from £14.13 to £14.59ph backdated to April = 4 months. Total to pay Clerk for past 4 months = £496.19.
- Web monthly costs Jun to Sept 2025 (4 x £9.99 = £39.96)
- Second instalment of grant for public toilets to Village Hall (£450.00)

138/09/09.11 Correspondence Hinkley and Rugby savings account interest rate has dropped from 4.25% to 4.00%.

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~~127/05/25~~.12 Matters brought forward by the District/County Councillors Council welcomed County Cllr Richard Hopley to his first meeting. His focus will be on highways and crime, and he aims to respond quickly to all emails. For any queries, email the Clerk and he will liaise. Cllr Williams raised the issue of the flooding caused by the inadequate culvert. ***Action*** *Clerk to provide Cllr Hopley with the relevant details so that he can chase us a solution.*

District Cllr Bulled explained that NDDC have been having additional meetings relating to devolution, and have to propose a way forwards on the 26th November 2025. As Exeter is currently refusing to join with the north Devon districts, one possible proposal will be a combined North Devon, West Devon, Mid Devon and Torridge authority, although there are significant concerns that the south of the county will suck up all of the resources. County Cllr Hopley has been insisting that North Devon be included in the Have Your Say roadshow (it previously was not), which is pencilled in for the 9th of October. Once confirmed, Cllr Hopley will inform the Clerk. While devolution will supposedly give Parishes greater control, without District many links to staff who help getting things done will be lost.

The meeting closed at 8:48pm

Date, time, and venue of the next meeting: **7:30pm Tuesday 11th November 2025, Molland Village Hall.**

Rick Wills

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