
TALATON

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

WEDNESDAY, 22nd APRIL 2026
AT 7.30PM
AT THE PARISH HALL, TALATON
MINUTES

Present:-

From Talaton Parish Council - Cllr Patricia Lenehan (Chair); Cllr Gerri Hawkins (Vice-Chair); Cllrs Bos, Hirt, Peters, Wood and the Parish Council Clerk – Mrs C McIntyre (Apologies received from Cllr Walker)

Other Councillors:- None. However EDDC Cllr Richard Jefferies arrived after the meeting had ended

Members of the Public:- 4 (Apologies had been received from various persons who due to holidays or other commitments were unable to attend the meeting)

1.Welcome

The Chair of the Parish Council welcomed all present, to the meeting

2.To confirm that the Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd April 2025 are an accurate record

The Minutes were confirmed as correct and accurate and were signed by the Chair. *Proposed by the Vice-Chair of the PC and seconded by Cllr Hirt of the PC*

3.Chair's Report – Cllr Leneham presented the following report

I'm going to give you an overview of the activities of the PC over the last 12 months, starting with the two topics that are of most interest to our residents; Solar Farms and Residential Development in the village. How do I know these are your priorities? Because 65 members of the public attended our regular PC meeting when the Solar Farm at Escot was on the Oct agenda, and 9 attended in Nov when we discussed a proposed development of 4 houses on land south of Lees Meadow. To put this into perspective, there were no members of the public present at any other meeting.

By the way, there is no news on either of these proposals*.

**Alan Frankin advised that the Lees Meadow application had been refused by EDDC*

Our approach to Planning Applications has always been the same; we look at the application and plans online followed by a site visit with the applicant and/or their agent, so that we fully understand what they are trying to achieve. We then consider the application objectively, based upon planning regulations and local policies or strategies, before submitting comments to the planning team at EDDC. This approach may be time consuming for us but it ensures that every application is treated equally and that we are making informed decisions on behalf of our parishioners, thereby preserving the rural environment and beauty of Talaton that we are all pleased to call home.

Roads and Potholes are a big problem for all of us and the PC discuss and report them every month. We also work hard to establish a good working relationship with the Highways Officer at DCC, currently Ed Polding. I'm sure we are all delighted to see the excellent work that has been done near Escot after years of atrocious conditions. I can assure you that we never gave up and we thank everyone for their patience and endurance during that horrendous time.

Our roads have also been badly affected by some serious water leaks and burst pipes. I am pleased to say that the PC were able to act swiftly in the case of one such emergency, by providing sandbags to protect nearby properties from flooding. My thanks to Cllrs who attended that event and to residents who also helped.

Turning to General Maintenance of PC assets, be they owned or leased

- Repainting of the Telephone Box, inside & out. Surplus paint was sold to another PC, saving us money!

- 4 wooden benches were treated with preservative
- Following a R/A by Cllr Walker on the state of the allotments, the following work was carried out: new rabbit proof fencing installed, hedge trimming, repairs to gate & shed. All of which was paid for by Section 106 monies paid to us from EDDC
- Tree work on The Moor (to keep cables clear of branches) and at Beacon Cross for public safety

At our annual Grant Giving in 2025, five local groups benefitted from a share in £1250. This exceeded our budget but was financed from the compensation paid to us by Voneus, following several years of a legal battle over a Way Leave agreement on The Moor, which we lease.

This is a perfect example of how your PC works for you. We were not daunted or intimidated when a huge company broke the law by ignoring our legal rights. We stood our ground and our Clerk was magnificently tenacious. Thanks to her we incurred no legal costs and the compensation helps us to keep our precept low, which directly affects your Council Tax bill.

Everything I have mentioned so far is run of the mill stuff for the PC every month, but of course we have some topics to deal with that are a one-off but can still be ongoing for quite a while. For example: -

1. We have two Solar Farms in the area with approved planning permission; one has already started construction and the other is about to start. Both bring a considerable amount of work for the PC, namely the Community Benefit Fund and the Traffic Management Plan which require our constant input, monitoring and reporting.

2. Regarding a potential 20mph speed limit in certain areas of Talaton; we were not selected for a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) because of the prohibitive cost. We were subsequently contacted by OSM Town Council (TC) to make a financial contribution towards a VAS at Fairmile, because our parishioners use that road/junction.

Once again, we stood up to the big guys and declined to make a financial contribution towards a VAS outside of our parish boundary based on the fact that our budget of £9k was already stretched to the limit, compared to their £300k budget.

3. We set up a new website and email domain (.gov.uk) to comply with the Annual Governance Statement.

4. We are in the process of setting up a Village Archive to preserve the cultural heritage of Talaton, which will be stored at the Devon Heritage Centre (previously known as the Devon Records Office) Our thanks to Pat Rice and Chris Harwood for their invaluable assistance with this project.

5. Our final event of the year was the CPR and Defibrillator training held here in the hall using their fantastic new audio visual system.

My thanks to our brilliant Clerk, Christine and all the Cllrs for their efforts over the last twelve months.

4.To receive reports from Devon County Council Councillor Cathy Connor and East Devon District Council Councillor Richard Jefferies

EDDC Cllr Richard Jefferies

Cllr Jefferies had provided the following report

East Devon District Council 2025-26 Summary

Key Policy Areas and Decisions

Environment, Climate, and Landscape

Adoption of the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan (2025–2030)

Required under national legislation for National Landscapes.

Participation in the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (Public consultation on the East Devon LNRS open until the 22nd May 2026)

Have Your Say Today - East Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan Consultation - Commonplace

➡ Trend: Strong alignment with statutory environmental planning and biodiversity policy.

Housing Growth and Community Infrastructure

Development of a Stewardship Strategy for public amenities in new housing developments

Response to increasing population growth and private estate management concerns.

➔ Trend: Shift toward long-term governance of community assets and resident wellbeing in new developments.

Housing Delivery – Build and Buy Scheme

One of the most significant developments in the past year has been the progression of the Build and Buy housing programme.

The scheme is designed to increase the supply of affordable and social housing in East Devon. It involves direct council-led development (“build”), and

Acquisition of properties (“buy”)

Cabinet approved continued investment and expansion of the programme.

The scheme is linked to the council’s housing strategy and homelessness prevention goals. This is of strategic importance as it addresses local affordability pressures, housing waiting lists and temporary accommodation costs

➔ Trend: Marks a shift toward a more interventionist, asset-based housing role for the council, moving beyond traditional reliance on private developers.

Waste and Environmental Services Reform

Progression of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) for recycling and waste services

Cabinet approved business case and financing structure (loan up to £2.8m)

➔ Trend: Movement toward alternative delivery models and financial sustainability.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution

Regular updates on Devon-wide reorganisation proposals

Cabinet engaged with regional structural reform discussions.

➔ Trend: Strategic positioning for possible structural changes to local government.

Also council and residents may be interested in the following summary of activity of the East Devon Countryside team which falls under my portfolio Environment -Climate and Nature.

Wildlife monitoring & conservation activity

A big part of their work (less visible than events) has continued throughout the year:

Management of 10 nature reserves and ~19 miles of coastline

Regular species monitoring and habitat work

Volunteer-led conservation (150+ volunteers involved)

Seasonal guidance (e.g. tick awareness)

Tracking notable species like reed warblers (one has made it to Gambia, a journey of 4365 miles!) Bird

Ringling Breakthrough: East Devon Warbler Rediscovered in Africa

Grey Long Eared bats at Seaton Wetlands, a number of the countries rarest mammals were recorded in 2025. Rare grey long-eared bat discovered at Devon's Seaton Wetlands - BBC News This is sign of high quality habitat and could open opportunities for further habitat work.

Wild East Devon has continued to run a busy calendar of nature-based activities across its reserves.

Spring Nature Trail at Seaton Wetlands (family wildlife trail)

Guided bat walks and evening wildlife experiences

Family Explorer Day (hands-on outdoor activities)

Late spring / early summer 2026 (upcoming but part of current cycle)

Canoe Safari on the River Axe

Nightjar walks (specialist birdwatching at dusk)

Moth & Muffin mornings (insect-focused events)

Typical annual activities (run every year, including last 12 months)

Wildlife walks (bats, birds, moths)

Craft workshops (e.g. willow weaving, wreath-making)

School holiday trails and family sessions

Also of interest to council and residents I include a summary of the work of East Devon National Landscape as I represent the local authorities on its partnership.

Over the last 12 months, activity in the East Devon National Landscape has been active, particularly around strategy, conservation projects, and community engagement. Here's a summary of the most important developments:

New Management Plan (2025–2030)

A major milestone was the adoption of a new 5-year Management Plan in 2025.

This plan sets priorities around:

Nature recovery

Climate action

Community engagement (people)

Sense of place / heritage

This is the key strategic document guiding all activity in the landscape until 2030.

Large-scale conservation & farming projects

“Connecting People and Landscapes”

A major £3.6 million partnership project funded partly by the National Lottery.

Focus:

Supporting regenerative farming

Improving habitats for species like bats, hedgehogs, dormice

Recent outcomes:

97 farmers engaged

580+ hectares improved for nature

Tree planting, grassland restoration, orchard revival

This reflects a shift toward nature-based solutions and climate resilience.

New access & recreation initiatives

Development of projects like:

“Connecting Coast and Country” – linking inland routes to the coast

Enhancements to the East Devon Way walking routes, improving public access and boosting sustainable tourism.

Strong focus on farming & land management

Expansion of the East Devon Farmers Group and “Farming in Protected Landscapes” grants

Activities include, training opportunities for farmers, funding sustainable land-use projects, encouraging biodiversity-friendly practices

Farming as central to both the economy and environmental recovery.

Biodiversity & species recovery work

Ongoing initiatives such as: “Saving Special Species”

Focus on, reversing biodiversity loss, monitoring key species and habitat restoration

Community engagement & education

Events, training days, and volunteer activities:

Hundreds of people involved in conservation activities

New educational resources (e.g. heritage/railway learning packs)

Goal: Connect local people with landscape and farming

DCC Cllr Cathy Connor- Whimble & Blackdown Division

Cllr Connor was not present and submitted her report after the meeting

April 2025 – April 2026

It has been a busy and productive year representing residents across Whimble, and Blackdown, and our surrounding communities. I am pleased to share an update on the work undertaken over the past 12 months, including investment in highways, support for local initiatives, and progress on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Banning Smartphones from our Schools

One of Liberal Democrats proudest achievements since taking leadership of Devon County Council is the clear position on smartphone use in schools, backing the principle of a countywide ban on pupils using smartphones during the school day from September 2026. The proposal—endorsed by councillors in 2025—aims to cover the entire school day, including break and lunchtime, with limited exemptions such as for medical needs. It is framed around improving children’s wellbeing and learning, with around 40,000 pupils expected to benefit from reduced digital distraction, bullying risks, and anxiety linked to social media use.

The move in Devon sits within a wider national shift, with the UK Government now moving toward a statutory ban across England, giving schools clearer legal backing to enforce restrictions that many already have in place. In practice, many Devon schools are already ahead of this, reporting calmer classrooms and improved focus where phone restrictions have been introduced early. While broadly welcomed by teachers and parents, the policy does raise practical questions around enforcement, storage, and ensuring consistency across different types of schools—issues that will need careful handling as the rollout approaches.

Highways

In its first full budget since taking office in 2025, the Liberal Democrat–led administration at Devon County Council has made a clear shift toward increased investment in highways and preventative maintenance. The 2026/27 budget includes an additional £15 million in capital funding for resurfacing, patching and wider road improvements, alongside £4 million of extra revenue funding specifically for drainage, ditching, and gully clearance—a recognition that better water management is essential to protecting rural roads from deterioration.

This uplift sits within a broader package of sustained investment. Overall highways maintenance spending is rising to more than £32 million annually, with a further £55 million of additional preventative funding committed over five years, and total highways investment exceeding £546 million across the same period. Alongside this planned programme, councillors have also responded to immediate pressures, approving an extra £3 million in-year boost in March 2026 to deal with the impact of storms and a sharp rise in potholes following severe winter weather.

Taken together, this represents a noticeable change in approach—placing greater emphasis on prevention as well as repair. By investing not just in resurfacing but in drainage, ditching and vegetation management, the administration is aiming to tackle the root causes of road damage, particularly in rural areas like East Devon and the Blackdown Hills where water run-off is a major issue. While the scale of Devon’s network means challenges remain, this increased and more targeted funding is an important step toward more resilient roads and better long-term value for taxpayers.

Devon’s Road Warden Scheme

Devon’s Road Warden scheme is a practical and empowering way for local communities to take a more active role in looking after their own roads. Supported by Devon County Council, the scheme trains volunteers—often parish councillors or community members—to carry out basic highways tasks such as fixing smaller potholes before they become bigger problems. By focusing on early intervention and local knowledge, Road Wardens help keep roads safer and more resilient, particularly in rural areas where drainage and overgrowth can quickly lead to deterioration.

Road Wardens work alongside the council’s highways teams, complementing rather than replacing professional services, and ensuring that smaller but important issues don’t get overlooked. For parish councils, it’s an opportunity to be proactive, cost-effective, and visible in making a difference—while for residents, it offers reassurance that local concerns are being addressed quickly and collaboratively. I will continue to actively promote the road warden scheme in the coming year.

Supporting Local Communities: Locality Budget Grants

One of the most rewarding parts of the role is supporting grassroots projects through the locality budget. This year, I have been delighted to help fund a wide range of initiatives that strengthen our communities. I would also like to advertise that the 2026/27 locality budget will be open for new applications in May. Projects supported in 2025/26 include:

- Contributions to village hall improvements, ensuring these important community hubs remain accessible and well-maintained.

- Funding for local sports clubs to upgrade equipment and facilities, encouraging participation across all age groups.
- Grants for environmental and conservation projects within the Blackdown Hills, protecting and enhancing our natural landscape.
- Funding new display cases for heritage centres to help protect artifacts of our shared history.

These relatively small grants often make a significant difference, unlocking additional funding and enabling projects to move forward.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon has moved into a decisive phase over the past year. Following a government requirement to replace the current two-tier system (county and district councils) with new unitary authorities, all Devon councils submitted proposals in late 2025 to government. You will probably be familiar with the different proposals including Devon County Council's preferred option of '911' ultimately the decision lies with central government as to which model is chosen.

A formal government consultation ran from February to March 2026, asking residents, businesses and councils for their views on these options, and this has now closed. The Government is currently considering the responses and is expected to announce its preferred structure in summer 2026, with new 'shadow' authorities likely to be established in May 2027 and full implementation expected and current district and county councils dissolved in 2028.

For town and parish councils, LGR is likely to bring both opportunities and challenges. Parish councils will not be abolished. However, there are concerns about capacity, as some smaller parishes may face greater expectations or administrative pressures as larger councils become more strategic and less locally focused. Overall, the success of LGR for communities like Whimble and Blackdown will depend on ensuring parish councils are supported, resourced, and genuinely involved in decision-making, rather than simply consulted.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the next year, priorities will include:

- Continuing to push for sustained investment in highways and drainage.
- Supporting community-led projects and ensuring the locality budget is used where it can have the greatest impact.
- Monitoring LGR developments closely and advocating for outcomes that benefit our area.
- Working collaboratively with parish councils and residents to address emerging issues.

Final Thoughts

It remains a privilege to represent Whimble and Blackdown. This role is most effective when it reflects the views and priorities of local residents, and I am always grateful for the feedback, ideas, and conversations that help shape this work.

There is a great deal to be proud of in our communities, and with continued investment, careful decision-making, and a focus on local needs, we can ensure they continue to thrive.

If you have any concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Cllr Cathy Connor

Devon County Councillor

5. To receive reports/presentations from local organisations of the Parish regarding their activities/projects during the last year and future plans

The Wildings School

Mike Rees Lee was not present (apologies received). However he had supplied the following report:-

The last year has seen some changes in young people at the Wildings, with one natural leaver and two transferring to a new school we have opened in the west of the county. Our one natural leaver has recently rejoined us as a member of staff, with responsibility for mentoring young people from a position of lived experience, alongside groundwork to maintain Royston Farm. Other young people are thriving with the

support we are providing, and we are extremely proud of each one of them.

Short Term:

- Supporting 10 of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in the locality. All young people thriving within the school.
- Steady progress on installation of garden building to enhance the provision, installation from Allwood Timber, Talewater works.
- Opening of the Wildings Lovaton, a sister school in west Devon, opened February 26.

Medium Term:

- Reapply for planning permission to develop the outbuildings into educational facility.
- Offer further support to local schools to assist with specialist education of young people with acute special needs.

Long Term:

- Compassionately and respectfully grow the Wildings in Talaton.
- Develop the Wildings school site into a community hub to support wider community.

The Talaton Talk Facebook Group

No one was present from the Group and no report had been received

Clay Shoot Club –

David Hirt presented the following report

Talaton Clay Pigeon Shoot is a 'not for profit organization' run by its members to encourage villagers to use their firearms on a regular basis with the aim of improving their shooting ability and competent use of their guns. Weather permitting we shoot on the second Saturday of each month and hold two competitions a year towards the end of the calendar year with the names of the winners displayed on the trophies in the pub.

The club caters for all abilities and we can provide both guns and ammunition so it is an ideal opportunity for villagers to come along and dip their toe in the water and see if it is for them, no prior experience is necessary as coaching will be provided as well as safety instructions. Clay Pigeon shooting can be enjoyed by both sexes and by people between the ages of 14 to well into their 80's so is a truly inclusive sport. This year the annual membership fee has remained £100, the vast majority of this fee is used to pay for personal liability insurance which is important in case of an unforeseen accident or incidents. The cost of each shoot of 40 clays is £10 and cartridges are currently available to purchase at £14 per fifty, a slight increase on last year in line with purchase costs.

We currently have 23 members in the club, which includes two junior. All adult members hold a current firearms licence. The number of members attending each shoot has remained healthy and averages 10-11 people per shoot.

We have recently used existing funds to purchase another new Olympic standard trap and as members can attest this allows us to set ever increasing more difficult targets to shoot or even miss!

If anyone would like further information or would like to come along and try their hand at shooting then in please call either myself, David Hirt on 07484 706 989 or Phil Moir on 01404 822523.

Parochial Church Council ('PCC')

Charlie Hutchings presented the following report

Living in this fabulous part of Devon is enhanced by the amazing individuals in the community who help each other in so many ways. The church benefits from several volunteers and we are very grateful for their support – both physical and financial. The Open Gardens and village BBQ were highlights of the year. The coffee mornings – which are open to all – are very popular.

The Reverend Marc Kerslake took a well-deserved sabbatical at the end of the year and his role as Rector is now taken by the Reverend Gudrun Thomas, who is based in Rockbeare. Several services were taken by the Reverend Rich Brooks and a licensed person from Whimble took the very successful Crib Service. We keep Marc Kerslake in our thoughts whilst he is away on sick leave and we are pleased that we can still have two services a month in the church.

It should be mentioned that the Parochial Church Council aims to work towards compliance with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

In 2026 the church supported charities such as the Ottery Help Scheme, Hospiscare, Shelterbox, WaterAid and Action for Children.

Talaton Garden Club (formerly known as the Garden and Produce Association)

Chris Harwood presented the following report

The year 2025/26 has been a busy one for the Talaton Garden Club.

The events and talks we have organized have been generally well-attended and enjoyed by all. The subjects for our talks have included Wintering Flowering Interest, Plants for Problem Areas and Vegetable Growing.

We have had several enjoyable garden visits including Sand Farmhouse at Sidbury and Weston House in Sidmouth, as well as a very pleasant Summer Social event hosted by Alan and Liz Franklin.

Our plant stall in May was a great success, raising £222 for club funds.

The Annual Show in August was also a success with an additional table needed due to the number of entries. Our new judges were excellent as was the standard of the show entries. As in previous years, the children's entries exceeded expectations with their creativity. The same was the case with the Pumpkin Carving Competition on 31st October where the standard was so high it was difficult for the judges to choose the winners. Our thanks to the pub for hosting the event.

A new feature was our Gardeners Question Time in October which was a relaxed and at times hilarious event as the audience put their questions to our panel.

We held our AGM in November followed by an engaging talk from Andrea Rye entitled 'Ten shrubs and why you should grow them' which was enjoyed by all.

We now have around 60 members and are looking forward to another year of events and gardening.

Many thanks to all those both on and off the Committee for their help with our various events, especially to Pam Weston who stepped down as our Secretary at the AGM after many years of service and to Alan Franklin for organizing the club's programme of events for 2026.

ROBOTS

Chris Harwood presented the following report

The objective and aim of our club is to foster and encourage social interaction and events for retired and semi-retired men of Talaton. The club is non-political and non-sectarian.

We have a membership of 35 and endeavour to arrange an activity each month as well as our monthly lunch generally held at The Talaton Inn on the last Thursday of the month.

However we were thwarted by storms Gorreti, Ingrid & Chandra in Jan '26 so our usual visit to Haldon Racecourse in January was a complete washout. But we still plan to get a Horse Racing fix in May at Newton Abbot.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting we have had the following activities:-

15th May '25

Cricket – Devon CCC v Somerset CCC T20 @ Exmouth CC

22nd May '25

Whimple Orchard Walk & Heritage Museum

A gentle 2.5 mile walk through some of the old cider apple orchards, working up an appetite for lunch at The New Fountain Inn. After refreshing ourselves, The Heritage Centre proved to be a very interesting snapshot of village life in bygone times. Brought memories of our earlier years with several comments 'caw-blimey we had one of those at home'.

6th June '25

Upottery Airfield Guided Tour

A very poignant date. 81 years previously this would have been a very very busy airfield, being the departure point for the US Assault Element of Overlord on D-Day 1944. Followed by lunch at the Aviator at the nearby Dunkeswell Airfield.

15th June '25

Cricket – two T20 matches between Devon CCC & Dorset CCC.

@ Sandford CC, Crediton. Honours even, 1st game Devon win by 6 runs, 2nd game Dorset win by 77 runs.

5th July '25

Church BBQ – assist with 'Lift & Shift' Gazebos, tables, chairs to set and take down and back to store.

30th July '25

Mackerel Fishing off Beer Beach.

Tenacity wins through, this was our third attempt and yippee we made it out to sea! Wonderful cruise along the coast towards Branscombe. The fishing though produced one fish! Retiring to The Fountain Head, Branscombe for lunch. All in all a great day out.

20th August '25

Tiverton Canal Walk.

A gentle 4.5 to 5 mile walk finishing in the Tea Rooms at the Canal Basin

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12th Sept '25

East Budleigh > The Holt > East Budleigh

A 5 mile circular walk from East Budleigh to Otterton Mill for coffee, then along the River Otter to The Holt at Budleigh Cricket Club for lunch. Fully refreshed walking back to East Budleigh along 'green lanes'.

11th Oct '25

Talaton Clay Shoot

A great day out, some did better than others at hitting the clays, but all thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the 'Clay Shoot', loan of the guns and the excellent BBQ to finish off the day.

18th Oct '25

Gentlemen's Skittles

A great night out at The Talaton Inn of bon homme and banter. Various levels of skittling skills displayed.

Followed by a Buffet Supper.

7th Nov '25

Venton's Cider Tasting

The weather was awful, BUT, the company was great, the cider excellent and the Ploughman's Lunch was something to behold.

We could not have hoped for more from our hosts Mark & Sharon Venton

11th Dec '25

Xmas Bash '25 – The Red Lion, Broadclyst.

All went well and everyone had a good time, The Red Lion did us proud.

11th Feb '26

Ten Pin Bowling – Exmouth

A great afternoon's entertainment. Once we mastered the technology of logging into the scoring system we did our best to reclaim our youth. Fingers and shoulders intact we could still hold a glass!

3rd March '26

Football – Exeter City v Burton Albion 7:45pm KO

This was the re-arranged match following the fire at the ground Nov '25. Tremendous atmosphere of chanting from 'The Bank', blazing floodlights all under a full moon and clear skies.

10th March '26

Walk – The Byes, Sidmouth

We parked up at the Sidmouth Rugby Club training ground and made our way down through The Byes along the River Sid to the Ham. After being a little windswept from walking along the Esplanade we retired to Pynes Bar in The Belmont Hotel for lunch. We walked back through the town and The Byes back to our cars. A very, pleasant gentle stroll.

The club is well attended and thriving, our exploits are written up and published in the Talaton Calendar. If that inspires anyone to join us just come along to one of our lunch meetings on the last Thursday of the month at The Talaton Inn, you will be most welcome.

Thank you for your attention.

Knit and Natter

The report was received after the meeting from Judith Colin

Knit and Natter has continued to meet fortnightly throughout the past year with numbers varying from single figures to over twenty. Sometimes the time is used to share craft skills and work on joint projects but the emphasis is often on the Natter part of our name. We continue to meet in The Talaton Inn from 11 o'clock to enable us to get plenty of Knitting and Nattering done before it's time for lunch – an optional add-on. During the year we have continued to create a variety of displays to mark festivals and seasons. The Newtown post box has been included more and also the chain from the Talaton Inn to Orchard Close. We

have continued to be as green as possible, reusing and modifying wherever possible. One example of this was the Christmas trees on the Moor - now back in storage, ready for a third outing in December. The flowers which decorated the net to publicise Open Gardens for two years are being transformed and will shortly be seen in their new guise.

There were two charity displays last year – one for Alzheimers and one for Breast Cancer. Both raised funds for two very worthwhile organisations. Later this year a display is planned to raise funds for Hospiscare.

We have some big plans for later this year which will hopefully be a big surprise. These will involve many different skills and also some people from outside the Knit and Natter group. With an aim to be as inclusive as possible we are setting up a “resource box” to enable more people to be involved with creating and constructing, spreading the workload and sharing skills.

We were fortunate to receive another grant from The Parish Council for which we are very grateful. Most of this money will be used to purchase items to support our plans for later in the year. We are very conscious of using the grant money wisely.

In July we ran the “Summer Fruit Punch” stall at the church barbeque and were able to raise a good sum for church funds. We have agreed to do this again this year.

In December we had a stall at the How d’ye Do with a range of handcrafted items with a Christmas focus for sale; our takings were significantly down on previous years and we wonder if we have saturated the market here. One possible alternative would be to have a stall at the Tuesday Coffee mornings during November to try to boost funds – different audience and ahead of the game for purchasing decorations?

We met at the Talaton Inn again for our Christmas meal which was well attended.

The social aspect of our group is very important to us and we hope that our joint creations put a smile on people’s faces as they move around the village. Everyone is welcome (crafter or not) and our dates are published in the Talaton Calendar.

It was noted that the wonderful displays the group created which were dotted around the village were warmly acknowledged and appreciated and also the hardwork that went into them. Without a doubt they brought a smile to everyone’s faces and long may they continue!

The Community Shop

Phillippa Bushell presented the following report

The Shop recently said goodbye to the chair of our committee, Val Blake, who has put in many years of service and hard work. She continues to work behind the counter on Tuesdays, and she is still doing a lot behind the scenes, so thank you Val. At the last committee meeting Bob Murphy was elected as the new Chair, on (his) condition that the job should be for only two years before another election is held. The committee has been fortunate to welcome two new members this year, Jennie Murphy and Fiona Timms, who are already making significant contributions to its work.

Lest this opening topic should make it sound as though we are flush with help at all levels, let me assure you that we are not. As always, we very much need more volunteers to staff the shop, and the committee would benefit greatly from having more members to spread the workload and get new projects off the ground. Projects like making better use of our retail space, possibly a refurbishment, and introducing EPOS to give us more effective stock control and detailed financial information

Continuing the effort to sell more local produce, we now stock delicious Talaton-produced icecream by The Udder Stuff. We have 6 other suppliers within a 2 mile range of the village – Chris Harwood’s honey, Brown Egg Farmer eggs, Oak Park milk, Strete Farm FR eggs, Mike Spry’s kindling, and local bbq charcoal. Then we have our members who sell their produce via the Sale or Return system, offering marmalade, jams & jellies, chutney, meringues, fruit & veg, flowers & plants, art & crafts, and logs.

Our best selling lines continue to be bread, eggs, soft drinks, biscuits, wine and crisps/confectionery. However, our local baker (from Honiton) has just closed down and it is challenging to find a good replacement from within the area – as we try out other bread suppliers in the near future, do please come in to check their wares and give us feedback.

Our social media guru, Tanya Jones, has raised the profile of the shop well beyond the parish boundaries, and we can see the impact in increased sales when she has highlighted items on Facebook. We have just launched a questionnaire to residents to find out what they want of us, along with the £5 challenge – asking each household to spend at least a fiver a month.

If this succeeds we should be in much better shape for the future because at present the shop is actually

recording a loss, small but regular, in spite of the annual boost to our turnover from Beautiful Days festival where we continue to provide the only 'corner shop' service. As always, we would like to thank all our manager, all our volunteers and especially, our valued customers. Without them, we wouldn't exist. And without a village shop, Talatonians would lose a vital communications link as well as a valuable convenience.
Philippa Bushell (Secretary to the committee), 22nd April 2026

Neighbourhood Watch

Andy and Jan May were not present (apologies received). However they had supplied the following report:-

Status of our scheme

We remain in contact with the local Ottery Rural policing team and have had excellent dialogue with the new Neighbourhood Inspector although much of their attention is focused on busier parts of their area stretching from Cowley to Feniton. Figures shaded in brackets show previous year values. The scheme is still managed by Andy and Jan May with the help of local co-ordinators, and this year we have been in touch with:

- Police Crime Commissioners office (OPCC)
- D&C Ottery rural neighbourhood policing team

Our page on the Parish Website is constantly updated. 9 (8) events have been posted in the appeals section and emailed to the community either related to events we have dealt with or alerts we have reviewed from the police. Links to relevant reporting sites, crime or policing related resources are regularly checked and updated. The Calendar is still used to outline our services, publicise events, provide crime prevention advice and points of contact. TNHWS still offers direct contact with households and businesses by email, in person, by phone or in writing.

Statistics

This year has seen a slight increase in matters we have dealt with. Reported crime has remained extremely low but has remained higher than the average of the last 9 years at 34 (44). 2024's high was explained by our neighbourhood policing team as related to repeat incidents at 3 locations which don't have a relevance to the wider community and a small cluster at Beautiful Days. That explanation remains the same in 2025. The number of "Neighbourhood Alerts" reviewed was the highest since we began 346 (264).

Figures for 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026.

- TNHWS have dealt with 9 (6) incidents and made 7 (3) referrals to the police.
- Using the crime mapping feature on www.police.uk for the calendar year over the last 9 years since 2017 in order the totals were 20, 20, 24, 18, 16, 8, 12, 43 and in 2025 there were 34 recorded crimes. The information is very general but the mapping does provide rough location information and apart from the clusters already mentioned by our neighbourhood policing team there were just 7 (3) other matters dispersed across the parish. By comparison for Cranbrook in 2025 the monthly figure varied between 32 (30) and 71 (61) and annual total was 628 (499). Our parish remains exceptionally low crime by both local and national standards.

Councillor advocate scheme

TNHWS have performed this role for the Parish Council since 2017, forming a link with the Office of Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

TNHWS have concluded that continued association has potential benefits for this community, giving us early warning of changes in policing that may affect us and a louder voice when communicating with our neighbourhood policing team. We will continue to attend select seminars that appear to have a direct relevance to Talaton, remain on the mailing list of the OPCC and will pass on information to the Parish Council where needed. The future of the scheme is in question with the announcement that the OPCC role is to be shut down.

Talaton Parish Hall Managers Committee

Alan Franklin presented the following report

Tanya Jones has now taken over from Simon Spencer as Chair although Simon still remains as a member of the Committee. As well as Chair, Tanya is continuing with her role as Booking Secretary.

The big change this year has been the installation of the projector and surround sound system. We've had one very successful film night and more are planned. We used a STSL licence at a cost of £170 for the first film. This licence allowed us to fully advertise the film. The licence cost was covered by the donations

received for which we very grateful. Now that we know that film nights are popular we plan to purchase a blanket licence at a cost of £525 per year which will allow us to show a big range of films as frequently as we want.

The projector has been used by the Garden Club, at least 1 private event and the Hall Committee. The latter enabled us to considerably reduce the amount of printed material with agenda, minutes and reports all on screen.

Since the last APM the Hall Committee has organised the How D'Ya Do, another very successful Call My Bluff evening, a quiz, a table top sale and the Open Gardens teas. The Tuesday coffee mornings continue to be run and are proving very popular and provide a valuable source of funds for the hall.

The Hall has seen regular use by the Community Theatre 4 All group both for rehearsals and performances of Par for the Course and Vanity. In addition there are regular Keep Fit and Yoga classes, the Produce Show and the regular Parish Council and Talaton Garden Club meetings plus a number of private events.

We have continued to clear out the storage areas with numerous trips to the dump and the situation has improved considerably although with scope for further improvement. Our big problem is that we simply have too many chairs. Nearly 200 with a maximum seating capacity of 100!

The current project being worked on is to upgrade the kitchen. Plans have been drawn up and the next stage is the obtain quotes. The plans do take accessibility requirements into account and this will include increasing the width of the entrance to the kitchen.

The Hall continues to be an active member of Devon Communities Together and attend the quarterly meetings of the East Devon cluster group comprising of about 15 halls. It's proving a good forum for the exchange of ideas and obtaining advice.

We all continue to manage the Hall for the benefit of the Village and are always open to suggestions as to events that you would like to see in the Hall. We would really welcome more volunteers to help organise and run events.

Community Theatre 4All

Tom Samsom was not present (apologies received). However he had provided the following report

Once again this has been a highly productive year with two productions performing in Talaton Parish Hall during the late winter and early spring.

The adult group presented "Par for the Course" a comedy set on a golf course during the annual Captain's Day Competition. The company for this production consisted of six performers, two stage crew and a small production team. Three performances were given to good sized audiences on all nights.

Two and a half weeks later the Youth Group presented an original work entitled "Vanity". Three performances of this were given. This production was very well attended with the second and third performances being completely sold out. The youth group now consists of 16 young people aged between school years 4 and 9. Already we have two more young people who have signed up for next year's group and reluctantly we have decided that we will have to cap the size of the group at a maximum of 20 as providing meaningful parts for more children than this puts too many pressure on writing and creates major issues with the making of costumes, not to mention the weekly logistics of teaching theatre performance skills and the direction of a theatrical performance.

Looking to the future next year will again see two productions in rehearsal. The youth group will re-meet in September and will again perform an original play in March (2027). More on that nearer the time has I have only just started process of writing. The adult group will start rehearsals for an open-air production of "Far From The Madding Crowd". The script for this has been written by Mike Gray and the play will be directed by him. "Far From The Madding Crowd" will perform in June 2027. More detailed information how to join both groups and their forth coming productions will be published in The Talaton Calendar nearer the time.

Finally, having stepped back from directing the next adult production I will be using the time to research

(and then hopefully write) a Whimble focussed historical drama to go into rehearsal in the autumn of 2027 for performance in 2028.

Feniton C of E Primary School

Louisa Mansfield Headteacher was not present (apologies received) . However she had provided the following report

Happy Easter from Feniton C of E Primary School!

I would like to introduce myself as the new Head of School here at Feniton CE Primary. I started my new role in September 2025 and have had the pleasure of working alongside Mrs Fulford our Executive Headteacher. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know all of the children, staff and families here at the school and becoming part of an already strong team. My background is in supporting those children with SEND and I have loved bringing my expertise alongside Rachel Hanna, Federation SENDCO to be able to support our most vulnerable learners. I have worked with all our Curriculum Action Teams to build up a picture of what happens at Feniton and to identify strengths and areas for development moving forward. This will be written into the Federation Development Plan for the start of next academic year.

Attendance has continued to be a key focus this year. This is an issue at county and national level, and we are working very hard on supporting the families to maximise the time their children are in school. Feniton currently has a good attendance percentage of around 96.6% (approx 94.5% nationally) and this is something we are continuing to improve. At Feniton we pride ourselves on cultivating excellent relationships with the families within our community and finding ways to make reasonable adjustments to support pupils who find it difficult to attend school.

Another key challenge is the expected drop in pupil numbers from September 2026. We currently have a double cohort in Year 6 of 57 pupils and when these pupils started school we were asked by county to accommodate the extra number. This brought additional funds to the school. Now the pupils are moving onto secondary school we will be needing to manage a significant financial loss of approximately £140,000 per year. Pupil numbers over the coming years continue to be low due to a national and local low birth rate and therefore financial management moving on will be a significant challenge for all schools and particularly for Feniton.

Feniton Primary School is working extremely hard to ensure its environment and teaching is as inclusive as possible and designed to meet an increasing range of medical and educational needs. At Feniton we have 23% pupils on our SEND register compared to 18.2% nationally. We are continuing to see an increase in the number of pupils joining the school with speech and language needs and Autism and ADHD. Schools in the local area are currently looking at ways we can work together more closely to support these pupils.

Despite these challenges we continue to focus on providing an engaging and high-quality curriculum and the Spring Term was no exception ending with our Year 6 Residential Visit to Osmington Bay, Weymouth.

Reception have visited Powderham Castle and Year 4 have visited The Eden Project as part of their learning .The entire school watched the pantomime The Wizard of Oz by M and M Productions, and Year 5 went to sing at Wellington School as part of their Come and Sing Event which involved 350 children from local schools. There have also been the usual sports events organised by our Ottery Local Learning Community. We enjoyed World Book Day and Comic Relief and made over £350 to support their charity.

It was a pleasure to take our Key Stage Two children to St Andrews Church for our Easter Act of Worship just before the holidays started.

Looking ahead to the summer, we will be supporting our Year 6's as they transition to their new schools. We have more trips and sporting events to look forward to as well as our Arts Week and end of year celebrations.

Payhembury School

There was no one present at the meeting and no report had been received

The Calendar

Simon Spencer was not present (apologies received) . However he had provided the following report

The Talaton Calendar is in its 364th edition in its current booklet format, and still under the stewardship of myself and Mark James (Arnie). Both of us would be happy to pass this responsibility over to new blood as we have been doing this for many years.

We are just keeping the Calendar going through the advertising revenue and some new advertisers coming in. We are very grateful for the various donations we receive from Village Organisations, and our Grant applications supported by the Parish Council.

We had a review last year which saw our revenue from advertising rise by increasing the fees, but that only

just stemmed the tide, and costs remain an issue, and further rises cannot be ruled out. If we start making a loss then the time for The Calendar may well be up, but not yet!

We aim to inform about events, and keep people up to date with local matters

I really hope each delivered booklet is read, as it takes a lot of work and coordination to produce them.

6. Public Forum

The Clerk was asked to request of the DCC and EDDC Cllrs* to produce reports post meeting

**Note Cllr Jefferies had been received after the meeting*

The amount of work that the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme involved was noted and Andy and Jan May were thanked for their contribution which was invaluable.

A parishioner advised that a traffic hazard had been created by vehicles parking on the hatched area at the Fairmile junction. However another parishioner had been advised that the hatched area was `discretionary` and therefore it was not illegal for vehicles to park on the area. The area was also outside the parish boundary but the Clerk could still report the matter to Ed Polding the DCC Highways Officer.

It was understood that the white road markings at Fairmile had been completed. However despite repeated requests the road markings had still not been completed at Bittery Cross. This was considered to be an urgent job in view of the fact that it was a safety hazard and this was a route used by parents to transport their children to schools in the area. The Clerk would contact DCC accordingly.

It was suggested that the educational facility based at Beacon Copse (a military inspired educational base for young people aged 11-16, who have SEND needs and struggle in a mainstream school environment, or require emergency education as referred by local authority, due to permanent exclusion); which was run by Southwest Alternative Provision be included for a report at the 2027 Annual Parish Meeting

The Chair of the PC – Cllr Patricia Lenehan was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Vice-Chair – Cllr Hawkins. Cllr Lenehan was stepping down from her role of councillor and chair of the PC at the end of April. She had been in these roles for 11 years. She was warmly thanked for her huge contribution to the PC and the community. She would be very much missed by the PC.

7. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at: 8.50pm

Date and time of next meeting:

To be arranged between 1 March and 1 June 2026

SIGNATURE OF THE CHAIR	
DATE OF SIGNATURE	

