

**BORDEN GATE**  
**The Parishes of Hockworthy, Huntsham and Clayhanger**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**held at Clayhanger WI Hall on Wednesday 28th May 2025 at 7.00 pm**

In attendance: The Chair of Borden Gate Parish Council & 11 Members of the Public including MDDC Cllr G Westcott & Devon County Cllr S Clist

Also in attendance: Clerk to Borden Gate Parish Council, P Bainbridge

1. Hilary Corcoran, Chair of Borden Gate Parish Council, welcomed members of the public to the Annual Parish Meeting for 2025.
2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 where adopted.
3. Chair's Annual Report 2025 Borden Gate Parish Council

#### **Chimney Down**

One of the main ongoing issues that the Council has been dealing with reached a satisfactory conclusion during the year. Last May, we heard that the clerk had attended with the police who moved on people who had taken vehicles all over and were lighting a BBQ on the down. The application for the s 106 funding was eventually made, and County Councillor Ray Radford made a further £250 available from his locality budget. That was put towards a replacement of the millennium bench, which was eventually installed with the help of volunteers. Mid Devon approved the application and £5,768 was available for the betterment of the common land.

The bulk of the money went on seating boulders, a picnic bench and a seating bench, together with 5 native trees and appropriate tree protection. Sadly, by November we heard that the signage was once again the target of criminal activity and needed to be replaced at an additional cost.

By March, the seating boulders were in position and visitors now seem to be parking responsibly. The trees are doing well, and the seat was installed between them. The whole programme was made possible by the support of volunteers. Installation of the picnic bench remains at the time of writing.

#### **Footpaths/ Parish Paths Partnership**

Broken gate posts and finger posts were reported to DCC, who told us that if the finger post removal happened again that it should be reported to the police as it was a criminal act. One of our paths (Huntsham) was mapped out for inclusion on the website as part of the Mid Devon Walking Festival in September. An inspection of the paths within the 3 parishes which form part of the rights of way network has been largely completed and issues and possible improvements to accessibility recorded. A minor maintenance grant, paid according to the mileage within the parish has been applied for to undertake routine work.

#### **Road and Traffic Issues**

The Clerk wrote to the Chief Executive of DCC about the poor state of the roads in the area. A response was received, albeit not exactly satisfactory. Several issues have been reported to the new Neighbourhood Highways Officer for the area. A decision to join DCC's Road Warden scheme has been deferred due to the lack of volunteers.

The flooding problem at Coombe Down Corner was resolved by a volunteer but elsewhere in Clayhanger there were issues with a blocked gully. Flooding was also reported in Huntsham, including around the war memorial.

#### **Police Reports**

Relevant alerts were posted on Facebook throughout the year. The clerk continued to Liaise with the local officer who had attended for unauthorised activity on Chimney Down, together with regular monitoring. Janet Gabb went out with a patrol and Paul Osman is to do so soon.

#### **District and County Councillors**

MDDC councillors Jane Lock and Gill Westcott attended regularly, keeping us informed on a range of matters, including changes in planning policy, Grand Western Canal, Class Q, Greenway Landfill proposal, reorganisation and devolution in Devon, recycling initiatives, scrutiny of SW Water. A planning enforcement officer was appointed during the year. County Councillor Ray Radford also kept us informed through regular reports.

### **Defibrillator Training**

A further training session was run by Wiveliscombe First Responders in October, attended by several councillors and volunteers. There are now 4 defibrillators in the area; Clayhanger, Huntsham, Hockworthy and Staple Cross. Although only one was purchased by the parish council, the ongoing costs of replacement pads etc are budgeted for when the precept is set.

### **Councillor Training**

A very useful session was held last week, facilitated by DALC. It covered -

- Roles and responsibilities of the council, councillors and clerk
- Powers, duties, precept – and importance of accountability
- Meeting procedures and how to contribute effectively to decision making
- The importance of community engagement and collaboration

### **Other**

Henry Hoare was co-opted as a Clayhanger councillor in November. Currently no vacancies.

A bench was installed in Huntsham. Nothing currently required in Clayhanger.

The Clerk has been doing CILCA training – many policy and procedure documents reviewed and adopted during the year.

Potential items to consider in the future - Emergency Planning but does require a lot of volunteer input. There is a company interested in bringing faster broadband to Clayhanger if enough people are interested.

Looking at the wider community, I have not had any direct reports from the other bodies which contribute to the community life in the villages. Church fetes were held in Clayhanger and Hockworthy. Hockworthy Church has recently appointed a new (Sampford Peverell) team vicar Rev Rachel Dunn, who seems to have settled in well.

Last but not least I thank the Clerk and all my fellow councillors for their contributions and forbearance over the year.

4. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest and suggestions for future annual meetings – It was reported that currently there is no vicar appointed in Clayhanger. There was further discussion on Emergency Planning, which is complicated by the three separate villages, however, it was pointed out that MDDC and Devon Communities Together can offer advice and support in this area.

5. The Chair closed the meeting at 7.29 pm.

**Hilary Corcoran**

**Chair, Borden Gate Parish Council, 28th May 2025**