

PETROCKSTOWE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extra Parish Council Meeting held in the Baxter Hall
on Tuesday 28th July 2026 at 6.00pm.

Present: Cllrs M Busby (Chair), J Richards, J Brasier, M Goaman, M Thompson

1. **Acceptance of apologies for absence.** Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record to be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Parish Clerk as it is usual for the grounds upon which apologies are tendered also to be recorded. Under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are accepted. Cllr B Purdie – on holiday - apologies sanctioned. Cllr Hunkin did not attend.
 2. **Declarations of interest.** Members to declare any interest they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the relevant authorities (**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**) Regulation 2012 (SI 2012/1464) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations. None further to those already declared.
- 1) **Current Business**
- a. **Resolve to write to TDC to recommend a judicial review** – It was **resolved** that the Chair would write to TDC to recommend a judicial review.
 - b. **Resolve to write to TDC to recommend that they amend standing orders to ensure that any planning application of a considerable size is referred to Full Council for decision** – It was **resolved** that the Chair would write to TDC to recommend that they amend standing orders to ensure that any planning application of a considerable size is referred to full council (included below)
 - c. **Resolve to contact the local Parish Council forum to prepare a statement on behalf of all local Parish Council regarding the Local Government Reorganisation** – It was **resolved** that the Chair would speak to the Parish Council Forum regarding LGR (included below)

With no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 7.15pm

Chairman Date

Initials of Chair

Petrockstowe

Dear Ken

Torrige District Council Planning Approval Structure

At the meeting of Petrockstowe Parish Council on Tuesday 21st July we discussed the structure under which TDC reviews and approves planning applications submitted to it. This was in the light of a recent meeting with Sir Geoffrey Cox MP in our village and of recent planning applications of increasing scale and complexity in the area.

Currently all planning applications are decided, either under delegated powers by the relevant planning officer, or are reviewed and decided upon by the planning committee. Having watched a recent planning meeting online relating to the BESS site at Webbery/ Woodtown it appeared to us that there are strategic matters in hand which deserve a wider degree of involvement. This is put into even greater relevance by the far larger applications coming down the line for schemes such as the Devon Data Campus and its associated BESS, as proposed by XLinks.

The resources which TDC would have to devote to this and any other similar planning applications are vast and in our view the decision making regime should therefore reflect that far greater investment in time and effort. We wish strongly to urge TDC to amend its constitution so that planning applications covering more than a certain area of land are approved by the whole council and not just the planning officer, or the planning committee. In our view this change is urgently needed so that TDC can be ready for the next such major planning application to be received.

We would suggest that the delineator for review by the whole council, rather than just the planning committee, should be an application covering more than 50 acres. This would therefore cover the increasing number of solar generation sites, large BESS sites and large residential developments. All of these are of far wider importance to the local population and are deserving of wider review. It is also fairer to the members of the planning committee to be able to share the load of such approvals when they face such public reactions.

We hope that this suggestion is favourably received and look forward to supporting TDC in future planning matters.

Look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Busby
Chairman Petrockstowe Parish Council

Initials of chair

Dear Ken

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon

At the meeting of Petrockstowe Parish Council on Tuesday 21st July we discussed the potential impact of the national government's proposals for LGR on Torridge and more widely in Devon. This was also discussed during a recent meeting with Sir Geoffrey Cox MP in our village.

We are very concerned that the proposals, if implemented, would result in serious issues in Torridge and other parts of north and west Devon. We believe that these concerns are shared at TDC and other authorities in Devon and we note recent statements from Julian Brazil, the leader of DCC on the subject.

Our view is that the lack of any significant urban areas in the proposed Devon Coastal and Countryside authority would mean an almost impossible budgetary shortfall in areas such as roads and social care, services currently provided on a country wide basis. The preferred solution advocated by TDC and others in its submission for LGR addressed this by including Exeter in a N and W Devon authority, but this has been lost in the government proposals. One of the over-riding principles of the government's ideas on LGR was stated to be increased local involvement in decision making, something that is entirely missing in the published proposals.

We understand that DCC is looking to move to a judicial review of the decision and we urge TDC (and other affected authorities) to join DCC in this and to work together to defeat the proposal put forward by central government. Several other county councils are doing the same and we are sure that this wider group can also gain traction by working together.

Our concern is that we understand that there is a 6 week deadline before notice of a judicial review has to be submitted and this is therefore a matter of extreme urgency. We hope that you can therefore move forward with this, in concert with DCC and others in a bid to stop this expensive and unworkable "solution" being imposed.

Look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Busby
Chairman Petrockstowe Parish Council

Initials of chair