

BRAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Braunton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 9 December 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Hall, Chaloners Road, Braunton.

Present

Cllrs: M Shapland, R Shapland, E Spear, D Spear, T Kirby, L Childs, A Bryant, V Cann, M Cann and E Blackmore.

Officers: T Lovell, Parish Clerk & RFO
A Corner, Senior Council Officer

District Councillor Simon Maddocks

Martyn Gimber, Chief Executive Officer North Devon Homes

5 members of the public.

203/2025/26

Apologies

Received from:
Cllr R Byrom prior engagement.
Cllr D Relph away.
Cllr G Bell unwell.

204/2025/26

Items not on the agenda, which in the opinion of the Chairman should be brought to the attention of the Council

The Chairman congratulated the Braunton Community Mens Shed on their success at the National Mens Shed Association Awards as they came first in the new category, the Heritage and Habitat Award. She also thanked them for the fantastic nativity display they had created around the Village Green tree, this is a wonderful asset to our village during the festive season.

The Chairman proposed and it was unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders for the duration of the meeting to all the District Councillor representing Braunton West and Georgeham to take part in the meeting.

(NC)

The Chairman proposed and it was unanimously agreed that the Council to consider a matter of urgency at tonight's meeting under Part B (exclusion of press and public).

(NC)

205/2025/26

Declarations of Interest

Cllr L Childs declared a Non Registrable Interest (NRI) in Minute Ref: 208/2025/26, as she is a

206/2025/26

**Public
Participation**

customer of North Devon Homes.

The Chairman of the Braunton Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) Steering Group addressed in respect of North Devon Homes (NDH) sites within the Parish. The BNP housing policies were developed in response to our community's local housing need. The Parish's Housing Needs Assessment clearly evidenced that the need is affordable secure rental accommodation. To meet this need we are heavily reliant of social landlords such as NDH. It is evident that NDH are not meeting the Parish's need as they are failing to deliver affordable housing on their sites which already have planning approval. Particular concern is the potential loss of the Mariners Court to open market development. Planning application 74411 – Mariners South Street was approved in January 2024 for development of 25 affordable rented and 4 shared ownership. There is no sign of this development happening even though the existing property has been vacant for four years. There appears to be no consideration given to the existing building being renovated which could potentially be a cost effective approach to development site and provide much needed affordable housing in our Parish. If NDH are unable to deliver the affordable housing on this site, why has it not explored the potential for the Braunton Community Land Trust to renovate the site rather than demolish. This would be a sustainable option securing affordable rented accommodation in perpetuity.

NDH still haven't built out the 6 affordable flats, 2 affordable ownership dwellings and disabled bungalow at Pill Gardens. Planning application 74143 – Pill Gardens was approved in April 2023. Following a viability statement submitted by NDH prior to approval being granted. The Local Planning Authority agreed to the removal of S106 contributions to education, recreation and public open space to enable construction of these affordable dwellings.

NDH claim that both of these developments Mariners Court and Pill Court were to be subsidised by the demolition of St. Annes 17 Pixie Lane, to enable NDH sister company Anchorwood Developments to build 5 open market dwellings. Despite local opposition to the loss of St. Annes which provided affordable rented accommodation the LPA approved the demolition of St. Annes and development of 5 open market dwelling in April 2022, planning application 74929. NDH claimed that St. Annes was not fit for renovation and therefore needed to be demolished. It is surprising

to find St. Annes still standing and that 3 of the leasehold apartments are on the open market at a projected value of £500 per unit.

The situation in respect of these three approved sites and NDH failure to develop them does not inspire confidence in NDH to protect and maintain the sites for affordable home provision in Braunton.

I ask that our elected representatives obtain categorical assurances from NDH that the two remaining sites – Pill Gardens and Mariners Court will provide the promised affordable housing for Braunton to meet our known housing need.

207/2025/26

Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 November 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

(8.0.2abs)

208/2025/26

North Devon Homes

The Chairman welcomed Martyn Gimber the CEO at NDH to the meeting. Martyn explained that Paul Scovell Development Manager at NDH had sent his apologies due to being unwell.

Martyn explained that NDH remains committed to Braunton and North Devon to deliver affordable housing. NDH are a not-for-profit organisation and have experienced difficulties obtaining grant funding from Homes England towards the development of social housing. It costs £200-£300k to develop one social dwelling each dwelling built requires £100k funding. This is a significant level of grant and to develop 30 social dwellings at Mariners Court NDH would require grant funding of £3 million from Homes England. NDH have been unable to obtain this level of grant and need to look at alternative options to develop the site.

NDH are committed to providing a high standard of social housing it looked at a number of options to develop Mariners Court. Martyn explained that it would not be possible to renovate the existing building at Mariners Court. The existing layout consists of shared bedspace bathrooms and communal areas. Due to the residents having to subsidise the communal areas such as the Day Centre rent and service charges were unaffordable for the tenants. Tenants were paying £80 per week rent and a weekly service charge of £150. The building has drainage issues and also contains asbestos the heating system is not fit for purpose it never worked correctly. To remove the asbestos and replace the heating system would make renovation not financially viable. In addition to this

the site is in flood zone 1 and flood prevention measures have increased the cost to develop the site. NDH concluded that if Homes England do not provide sufficient grant funding it would need to submit a new planning application with open market housing to pay for the social dwellings on site. Until NDH have carried out a viability study it is unable to commit to what level of social housing it can provide onsite.

NDH are not proud of the situation at Mariners Court the money that has been lost in fees and charges could have been avoided. NDH are still committed to delivering the affordable scheme which has planning permission but this is subject to Homes England providing the funding.

To strengthen its position with Homes England NDH will demolish the existing building. This will also reduce ongoing costs as NDH currently pay double council tax on the vacant building and have to employ a security firm to ensure the site remains secure. It plans to start demolition of Mariners Court in March 2026 it will take 15 weeks to complete.

Pill Gardens has been empty for a considerable amount of time but NDH are committed to build out the 6 affordable flats and 2 affordable ownership dwellings. The disabled bungalow site will not be build as North Devon Council who own the land have issues with squatter rights. The existing building at Pill Gardens is scheduled to be demolished mid February. The rebuild of Pill Gardens will take 1-1.5 years.

The St. Annes site at Pixie Lane provided 5 affordable flats which were not standard design and were difficult to maintain and look after. NDH plan to retrofit the existing flats and sell on the open market to generate income towards the development of Pill Gardens and Mariner Court.

Cllr A Bryant requested if NDH have a retrofit policy. Martyn explained that where possible NDH do invest in retrofitting its existing housing stock, last year it invested £6.1 million in retrofit projects.

NDH are proud of its development in South Molton which is a similar site to Mariners Court but this was only made possible due to external funding from Homes England and Sustainability funding which is no longer available.

The Parish Council expressed its disappointed that the existing Mariners Court would be demolished

with no plans to provide further affordable housing onsite, especially as we are in a housing crisis and people are desperate for truly affordable housing.

Martyn agreed to keep the Parish Council updated on progress with their sites in Braunton and he would attend a future meeting.

The Chairman proposed and it was unanimously agreed to bring agenda item 26 'Devon County Council Shaping the future of Devon Library Services consultation' forward to this point on this the agenda.

(NC)

209/2025/26

**DCC Shaping
the future of
Devon Library
Services
consultation**

The Chairman welcome Brian Gilbert from the Friends of Braunton Library.

Brian explained that the consultation is a cost cutting exercise DCC are proposing to cut opening hours across all libraries. They are also considering providing 'open access' libraries. Customers will be provided with a swipe card which would give them access to unmanned libraries run by the community. Losing experienced library staff would be great loss to the current library service.

The proposal for Braunton Library is to close on Friday from 10am – 5pm and open on a Wednesday afternoon from 2pm – 5pm. This would reduced opening hours from 21 per week to only 15 hours per week. The consultation claims that Fridays are Braunton Library's quieter day. This is untrue as Knit and Natter and Bounce and Ride are both held on Fridays at Braunton Library. These events attract residents of all ages to the Library. The proposal is to close all smaller libraries on a Friday. Staff will only be consulted after the public consultation ends on the 22nd February 2026.

Brian urged Councillors to encourage their family and friends to complete the online consultation questionnaire. The more responses received the better chance of saving the Braunton Library and its current service provisions.

The Chairman thanked Brain Gilbert for attending the meeting and explained that the consultation would be on the next agenda for members to consider responding.

210/2025/26

Action Sheet

RESOLVED: That the action sheet be noted.

(NC)

211/2025/26

**Police
Representation**

a. There was no police representative present.

b. Cllr L Childs did not attend the last Councillor

Advocate meeting as it was held in Plymouth and the weather was too bad to travel.

212/2025/26

**Report from
Devon County
Councillor**

County Cllr Graham Bell had sent his apologies there was no County Cllr report to consider.

213/2025/26

**Report from
North Devon
District
Councillors**

District Cllr E Spear, prior to the meeting, circulated information regarding the government reorganisation in Devon.

Cllr S Maskell explained that he had been in contact with Homes England regarding NDH not delivering on social housing in Braunton. Homes England were interested in developing Mariners Court and were considering funding the project. 54 people in Braunton are waiting for a 1 bedroom social rented dwelling. This development would go a long way to meet the local need.

Cllr P Maskell had sent her apologies due to a close relative being taken into hospital. Prior to the meeting she had circulated her report amongst members for their consideration.

214/2025/26

Planning

Cllr E Spear in her capacity as North Devon Councillor, stated that any opinions expressed during discussions on the following planning applications represent a preliminary view and that she will naturally reconsider the application fresh when presented all the facts at principal level.

a) 81051

Proposed: Change of use of land to allow for seasonal camping from Easter to the end of September of each year

Location: Braunton Sands Campsite First Field Lane
Braunton Devon EX33 1ES

Applicant: Alan Friend

Moved by Cllr M Cann, seconded by Cllr E Blackmore to comment, as follows:

RESOLVED: That the Council makes the following comments in relation to planning application 81051.

- The highway access to the proposed site is not suitable to take the increased volume of vehicles that this proposal would result in. The applicant should consider Policy BE9 in the Braunton Neighbourhood Plan (BNP).
- There is insufficient information to comment regarding the proposed structure that the applicant claims has been on site for some time.
- Concerns regarding being in close proximity to the Great Field. The applicant should consider

Policy NE6 in BNP.

(NC)

b) 80791

Proposed: Change of use from agricultural land to sui generis for use as a secure dog walking field, with associated fencing, gates, access, parking and erection of field shelter

Location: Land West of Silver Street Braunton Devon

Applicant: Sean O'Reilly

Moved by Cllr D Spear, seconded by Cllr M Cann to recommend refusal.

RESOLVED: That the additional information provided by the applicant does not change the opinion of Braunton Parish Council and it wishes to reiterate its previous reasons for refusal, as follows:

- The proposed change of use would have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties due to increased noise levels and unpleasant smell. It would be contrary to Policy BE1(2)(iii) in the BNP.
- The proposed use will significantly increase traffic on Silver Street. Concerns regarding safety of pedestrians and motorists due to inadequate and safe access and egress to the site via a narrow lane which is regularly used as rat run.
- The applicant has not ensured good and safe accessibility to the site for its proposed waste removal contractor and is contrary to Policy BE1(2)(iv) in the BNP.
- The proposed use will introduce a large number of dogs to the area. Concerns regarding the negative impact this will have on local and protected wildlife in the vicinity including bats and otters. The application is contrary to policies NE1, NE2 and NE7 in the BNP.

(NC)

c) 81091

Proposed: Two-storey extension and alterations to dwelling

Location: Hartlands Ash Road Braunton Devon
EX33 2EF

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Capron

Moved by Cllr T Kirby, seconded by Cllr R Shapland to recommend approval.

RESOLVED: That the Council recommends approval the proposed extension is well related to scale, form and character of the settlement and meets the requirements of Policy BE1 in BNP.

(NC)

d) 81083

Proposed: Removal of conditions 13, 14, 15 and 16 (HMMP) attached to planning permission 78790 (Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling with associated landscaping)
Location: Marisco Saunton Braunton Devon EX33 1LG
Applicant: Ted Lucas

Moved by Cllr V Cann, seconded by Cllr L Childs to commend.

RESOLVED: That the Council would suggest that rather than removing the conditions altogether they should be reworded to provide clarity that the applicant's would be responsible for managing the onsite BNG but not responsible for managing the off-site BNG.

(NC)

e) 81113

Proposed: Variation of condition 4 (ancillary accommodation restriction) attached to planning permission 74164 (conversion and enlargement of the existing garage into an office and living space) to allow for short term holiday letting
Location: 11 Shortacombe Drive Braunton Devon EX33 1JD
Applicant: Mr & Mrs S & E Blott

Moved by Cllr M Cann, seconded by Cllr R Shapland to recommends approval.

RESOLVED: That the Council recommends approval subject to the comments of the Environmental Officer being taken on board.

(NC)

f) 81114

Proposed: Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 & 4 (materials) attached to planning permission 80485 (dormers to rear elevation, alterations to roof design, addition of porch and alterations to driveway entrance) to allow design amendments
Location: Old Bowling Green, Lower Park Road, Braunton, Devon, EX33 2HJ
Applicant: Mr and Mrs Elliott

Moved by Cllr R Shapland, seconded by Cllr V Cann to recommend approval.

RESOLVED: That the Council recommends approval.

(NC)

215/2025/26

North Devon
Council
Planning
Decisions

80617

Description: New dwelling (Fallback position to replace existing consent for conversion of barn to dwelling) – 77318

Site Address: Boode Farm, Halsinger, Braunton,
Devon, EX33 2NN
Applicant: Steven Sweet
Decision: WITHDRAWN
Decision Date: 19/11/2025

80744

Description: Internal and external alterations to farmhouse and associated outbuildings, erection of a new stable block in paddock; and retrospective approval for existing car port, including roof replacement and installation of solar PV panels (Amended Description)

Site Address: Dyers Farm, Nethercott, Braunton,
Devon, EX33 1HT
Applicant: Kirsteen Ainsworth
Decision: APPROVED
Decision Date: 20/11/2025

80747

Description: Listed building consent for internal and external alterations including the addition of a new oak-framed glazed porch at the rear of the Farmhouse (Amended description)

Site Address: Dyers Farm, Nethercott, Braunton,
Devon, EX33 1HT
Applicant: Kirsteen Ainsworth
Decision: APPROVED
Decision Date: 20/11/2025

80781

Description: Two Storey extension and internal alterations together with the erection of domestic garage

Site Address: Quarry Cottage, Corilhead Road,
Braunton, Devon, EX33 2EW
Applicant: Mr George Lucas & Miss Rebecca Dunbar
Decision: APPROVED
Decision Date: 19/11/2025

81101

Description: Approval of details in respect of discharge of conditions 3 (Contamination) & 5 (CMP) attached to planning permission 75397 (part demolition of existing vacant building and erection of 3 detached residential dwellings together with the conversion of the retained part of the property into 2 residential dwellings)

Site Address: 25 Wrafton Road, Braunton, Devon,
EX33 2BT
Applicant: Andy Wreford
Decision: APPROVED
Decision Date: 27/11/2025

80545

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|-------------|---|---|
| | | <p>Description: Erection of 2 dwellings (fallback position to 76973 & 77983) to include air source heat pump, pond, solar arrays and other associated works</p> <p>Site Address: LPG Storage Yard, Sandy Lane, Braunton, Devon, EX33 2NU</p> <p>Applicant: N Sampson</p> <p>Decision: APPROVED</p> <p>Decision Date: 27/11/2025</p> |
| 216/2025/26 | <u>Finance</u> | <p>a. RESOLVED: That the supplier payments on the schedule from 12 November – 9 December 2025 were approved and drawn in the total sum of £11,182.54.</p> <p>b. RESOLVED: That the Council's November 2025 direct debits and standing orders for the sum of £5,900.11 be retrospectively approved.</p> <p>c. RESOLVED: That the PAYE, NI and pension contributions for December 2025 were approved and drawn in the total sum of £20,388.66.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(NC)</p> |
| 217/2025/26 | <u>Representatives on Outside Bodies</u> | <p>RESOLVED: That Cllr E Spear to resign as the Council's representative on the Vivian Moon Community Centre and Cllr E Blackmore be nominated to replace her as the Council's representative.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(NC)</p> |
| 218/2025/26 | <u>To ratify decision taken under delegated powers 12 November – 9 December 2025</u> | <p>RESOLVED: That the decisions taken under delegated powers from the 12 November – 9 December 2025 be ratified and adopted, attached as – appendix one.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(NC)</p> |
| 219/2025/26 | <u>Payment App in Parish Council Car Parks</u> | <p>The Clerk reported that no further progress had been made regarding the Parish Council setting up two RingGo zones under the NDC existing RingGo account. There had been some uncertainty regarding how this would operate and they are waiting for clarity from RingGo. The Clerk has made enquiries with National Parking Platform as an alternative option.</p> |
| 220/2025/26 | <u>Annual Governance and Accountability Return – External Auditor Report</u> | <p>The Council noted that the External Auditor raised the following matter in their final report.</p> <p>Information has come to our attention from the internal auditor highlighting the fact that the smaller authority did not comply with the publication requirements of the ICO Model Publication Scheme. Section 1, Assertion 3 has been incorrectly completed and should have been answered 'No'.</p> |

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| | | RESOLVED: That it be noted that Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25, accounts ending 31 March 2025, had been signed by the External Auditor PKF Littlejohns LLP. | (NC) |
| 221/2025/26 | <u>Braunton Parish Council ICO Publication Scheme</u> | RESOLVED: That the Council adopts the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme, attached as – appendix two. | (NC) |
| 222/2025/26 | <u>Asset Register</u> | Members considered the updated asset register. It noted that the Chartered Surveyor’s new insurance valuations had been added which reduced the insured sums by £1,240,225. It was noted that the Council had provided new play equipment at the Mowstead Play Park at a cost of £17,832 which increased the play equipment value to £210,579 | |
| | | RESOLVED: That the updated Council Asset Register be approved. | (NC) |
| 223/2025/26 | <u>Public Conveniences</u> | The Clerk reported that the North Devon Council Public Conveniences in Caen Street Car Park had been transferred to the Parish Council on 9 December 2025. | |
| | | RESOLVED: That the Council notes the transfer date of the asset to the Parish Council and approves the risk assessment, attached as appendix three. | (NC) |
| 224/2025/26 | <u>DCC Upgrade The Square Traffic Lights</u> | The Clerk advised that the Council had been contacted by WPS Partnership Consultants to Devon County Council regarding proposed works to upgrade the traffic lights in The Square. They are proposing to carry out the works w/c 12 October 2026 and estimate that they will take 2-3 weeks to complete. They have requested if the Parish Council could accommodate them with a compound and welfare area in the Caen Street Car Park for the duration of the works. The works will require the temporary closure of South Street for two nights and they have requested if the Council would grant permission for a diversion via Caen Street Car Park. It is not possible to divert traffic via Sings Lane and First Field Lane due to the weight restriction on Score Bridge. | |
| | | RESOLVED: That the Council fully supports this scheme and it agrees to: | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a temporary compound area of welfare and storage facilities in Caen Street Car Park. • run a diversion (evenings) through Caen Street Car Park for a couple of nights while the traffic loop work in the proximity of South Street is | |

- carried out.
- start date of 12th October 2026 to last approximately three weeks.
- Not to charge DCC for the use of the car park during the works but it would request that any small remedial works required to the car park surface are carried out prior to DCC's contractors vacating the car park.

(NC)

225/2025/26

Parish Council Meetings

Cllr R Shapland suggested that the Council consider returning to two face to face Council meetings per months this would be instead of holding its advisory discussion meeting. This would help reduce the size of the Full Council agenda by splitting the workload over two monthly meetings. It was noted that the Government had agreed to legalise virtual/hybrid meetings for councils including parish and town councils but no legislation had yet been passed. In light of this information, Cllr R Shapland suggested that the Council continues with its advisory discussion meetings and waits to see if the Government passes the legislation to legalise virtual meetings for Councils next year.

RESOLVED: That the Council notes Cllr R Shaplands suggestion and the matter be considered at a later date.

(NC)

226/2025/26

Velator Clean Up

The Clerk reported that following the Environment Agency's removal of vegetation on the riverbank the boatowners and community had organised a clean up of Velator Quay. The Council staff and councillors helped with the clean which was extremely successful despite the horrendous weather conditions. North Devon Council had been supportive and assisted with the removal of the waste that included abandoned bikes, polystyrene, metal and plastic. A large tractor tyre was also removed from the riverbank thanks to West Cross Garage who agreed to dispose of it.

RESOLVED: That the Council

- officially thanks everyone who helped with the clean up at Velator Quay on the 9 December, and NDC and West Cross Garage for agreeing to dispose of the waste collected from the river and bank.
- Agrees as part of its long term strategy that it will organise a further official clean up at Velator next year.

(NC)

227/2025/26

Braunton Bowling Club – Advertising Boards

RESOLVED: That the Council to agree for the Braunton Bowling Club to place an advertising board on its Club House.

(NC)

228/2025/26 **Braunton Beats** The Council considered a request from the organiser of the Braunton Beats to provide free parking during their event Friday 15 to Sunday 17 May 2026. The Council fully supports this event but it felt that providing free parking would set a precedent for all events held in the village which would negatively impact the financial management of the Council. The Council would be happy to meet with the organiser to discuss how the Council might be able to support the event possibly partial free parking over the weekend.

RESOLVED: That the Council regretfully would be unable to provide free parking for the duration of the Braunton Beats event.

(NC)

229/2025/26 **Exclusion of Press and Public** RESOLVED that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the following matters be taken in the absence of press and public (Public (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960) as the items contain exempt information as defined by the Local Government Act 1972 Sch. 12a Pt. (3).

230/2025/26 **Staff Matters** The Council noted that staff number 16 would need time off of work due health reasons.

Staff number 20 had agreed to temporarily take on some staff number 16's duties to ensure that the Council can continue to function. It was agreed that the Council would not be able to progress any projects during this time. The Council would only be able to provide its core essential duties and services during staff number 16's absence.

The Clerk advised that the Council could consider appointing a Locum via the Local Council Consultancy.

RESOLVED: That the Council

- a. agrees for staff number 20 to temporarily take on the core essential duties of staff number 16 during their sickness absence.
- b. to monitor the situation and to appoint a Locum at a later date if required.
- c. wishes staff number 16 a speedy recovery.

(NC)

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed by the Chair:
(Cllr M Shapland)

Date: