DOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON Monday 6th July 2026- Draft

PUBLIC SESSION – 7 members of the public attended

Verto Homes proposed development for 44 homes at land south of Rectory Road. Members of the public raised concerns ranging from environmental and biodiversity impacts to highway and property safety and village resources. Cllr Walker advised that planning permission has not yet been submitted and until the details of the proposals are known the Council cannot take a view. Once there is an application submitted this will be validated on the Torridge District Council's Planning Portal where people can submit their comments. He advised the public to put their concerns to Torridge District Council in the meantime.

Pym Gander requested that it be noted in the minutes that she is concerned about how busy Rectory Road is already. If a one way system is adopted it would also create problems for the construction vehicles. Pym also checked if the planning portal would be open in August. Ward Cllr Lock confirmed that it would be.

Cllr Walker confirmed that an additional meeting can be arranged for August if planning details are released.

Dolton Rangers Football Club. John Folland gave an update on the club. Since qualifying for funding, they are in the process of purchasing a new mower. It is a requirement that this is advertised on their website. Cllr Martindale asked if there will be a regular series of fixtures throughout the winter. Details will go on the club's facebook page and possibly in the Dolton & Dowland Diary.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

PRESENT: Cllrs Walker, Giles, Tremayne, Rendell, Jones, Martindale, Goucher and Moore, Ward Cllrs Elliott and Lock and clerk Caroline Gay.

55 (26/27) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Mullan.

56 (26/27) MINUTES: The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st June had been circulated. They were agreed to be a correct record by all Cllrs and were signed by Cllr Walker, this was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Martindale.

57 (26/27) MATTERS ARISING: Matters Arising from 1st June:

a) (i) **Risk Assessment Procedure**-Responsibility: Cllr Rendell. A draft template is in the process of being put together. Cllr Walker will work with Cllr Rendell to finalise. This will include the Health & Safety Policy. Cllrs Rendell and Walker will also look at the current Asset register and compare against sums insured on the Zurich Policy to ensure cover is adequate. It was also raised by Cllr Elliott to check the policy for personal accident cover in relation to our caretaker.

a) (ii) **Budgetary Process**-Responsibility Cllr Tremayne, with Cllr Moore assisting. A draft budget has been produced for the first quarter 26/27 and this has been circulated to all Cllrs. The Financial Accounts are as expected and in line with those of 25/26, reasons for exceptions are expected, known and documented (copies attached).

b) **Standing Orders**- The clerk is working on a revised version of the Standing Orders, updated in line with NALC Model Standing Orders 2025 Update (England), to include such wording that contains legal and statutory requirements. This will be revisited for adoption in September.
c) **VAT**- A completed list of VAT numbers has now been carried out and figures collated. Cllr Tremayne will carry out final checks and then submit to HMRC. The current year's accounts allows for VAT numbers to be recorded at the point of payment.
d) **IT compliance/Data Protection/Councillors generic email addresses**-Cllr Jones. The clerk downloaded and provided a road map document. Cllr Jones felt that much of it doesn't really apply to DPC as no data stored. Currently, it is felt that no further action is needed. Cllr Jones will look to add Cllrs responsibilities on the website. Cllr Goucher stated that her council email doesn't appear be working and would prefer to revert to private email. Cllr Martindale noted that if a freedom of information request is received then this would need to be carefully documented.
e) **Human Resources**- not a statutory requirement for DPC, but good practice. Cllr Moore has offered to oversee responsibilities for the clerk, being an employee and also external contractors.
f) **Previous Clerk's backpay**. Confirmation has been received from Torridge District Council's payroll department to confirm that no official contract exists between TDC and DPC. It is a bit of a grey area as to whose responsibility it was to ensure that the correct pay rate was processed throughout the previous Clerk's term of employment. On inception the Chair provided TDC with a pay scale and accompanying rate. TDC have said that they would only implement any changes on further instruction from the Chair. Cllr Ward was asked if she had any knowledge on such matters and she felt that it could be the responsibility of Chair to provide up to date instructions. The decision was unanimous for the Clerk is to compose a letter to TDC.
g) **Zurich** – increase in insurance cover for new play equipment-covered in point a) (i) above.

58 (26/27) CLLRS REPORTS:

Ward Cllr Lock raised about the Data Campus and Battery Storage Site (item 60 (26/27) (f) and would encourage everyone to attend a meeting if possible. Until planning permission is submitted the details won't be known. Cllr Jones attended a meeting of Sir Geoffrey Cox to gain more insight on Xlinxs. There is a lot of public concern. Cllr Tremayne advised there is a series of public meetings next week to go through the AI data centre – on Great Torrington Website. Cllr Martindale noted County Cllr Cottle-Hunkin has written to Parliament. Nothing can be directed until there is planning permission. Cllr Lock feels it will go direct to secretary of state.

59 (26/27) FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Payee	**Date of Invoice**		**Gross**	**Inc VAT**	**Cq No**
To sign at the meeting					
David Lock	23.06.026	Cutting/strimming parish grounds x 4	1025.00		1602
Caroline Gay	24.06.26	June home office exp's plus stationery supplies	87.25	12.88	1603
Dolton & Dowland Village Hall	30.06.26	Village hall hire charges for June.	16.50		1604
Phil Greenwood	01.07.26	Grass cut football field x 4 plus 1 x strim of outer headland	290.00		1605
Gareth Crout	30.06.26	Caretaking duties & supplies – June	371.00		1607

Zurich Insurance	06.07.26	Replacement cheque for No.1595 11.05.26-to be cancelled.	1,416.46		1606

a) RECEIPTS after 1st June				
Dolton Rangers Football Club	£155.00			
BANK RECONCILIATION TO 01 JUNE 2026				
Balance as at bank 01/06/2026				
Natwest current account	22,075.60			
Unity Bank	5,357.78			
Less un-presented cqs at 01/06/2026	2,303.77	chq	amount	
		1595	1,416.46	
		1596	348.00	
		1597	9.25	
		1598	18.68	
		1599	100.00	
		1600	16.50	
		1601	394.88	
Plus uncleared credits at 01/06/2026	155.00			
Total balance at bank as at 01/06/2026	25,284.61			
Cash Book				
Opening Balance from Accounts at 01/04/2026	26,980.02			
Less payments to 01/06/2026	10,868.41			
Plus receipts to 01/06/2026	9,180.00			
Sub total balance as per cash book as at 01/06/2026	25,291.61			
Less service charge payments – Unity – as at 01/06/2026	7.00			
Balance as per cash book as at 01/06/2026	25,284.61			
			2,303.77	
Variance	2,148.77			

Note.
Statements produced by end June/beginning of July not yet received. Cllr Moore checked the accounts for payment. Proposed by Cllr Martindale, seconded by Cllr Rendell.

b) any other financial matters: Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR)-this is now with the external auditor PKF Littlejohn for processing.

60 (26/27) PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

a) **Applications to consider: 1/0415/2026/FULM-**Repowering two wind turbines with a single new turbine and other associated development. Land At Grid Reference 262088 110814, Hollocombe, Devon. Notification received as neighbouring parish-DPC not required to respond. **1/0463/2026/FUH**-Replacement of existing conservatory with new sun/garden room - Silverdale, Barfield Close, Dolton. E 257576 N 112371- Cllrs unanimously in support of.

b) **Applications permitted**: **1/0322/2026/AGMB.** Change of use of agricultural building to 1 x no dwelling house and associated building - operating under Class Q. Grid Ref: 257069 113990.

c) **Applications withdrawn**: None.

d) **Applications refused**: None.

e) **Any other planning matters: Land South of Rectory Road. Proposed residential development for 44 new homes (Verto Homes).** Cllr Martindale proposed the clerk write to invite the developers to our next meeting so that they can explain the scheme and answer questions-all councillors were unanimously in agreement. Cllrs Tremayne, Rendell, Walker, Martindale and Ward Cllr Lock referred to other development sites in Dolton (and Winkleigh) that have barely broken ground as property sales are slow, with Orchard Gate developers trying to amend planning to remove the affordable housing S106 element.

f) **Data Campus and Battery Storage Site, North Devon-** discussed -see 58 (26/27)

g) **Local Plan Scoping Consultation– People and Place, North Devon and Torridge District Councils-**new local plan for northern Devon. Cllr Martindale offered that the focus appears to be on housing expectation. Members of the public, businesses and organisations are invited to complete a survey. http://www.torridge.gov.uk/local-plan-scoping. Cllr Walker proposed to revisit this at a future date. Councillors were unanimously in agreement.

61 (26/27) PARISH GROUNDS:

(a) Dennis Cross Playground- Cllr Martindale – update on repair works/replacement. Unable to obtain an inspection of the pedal roundabout – bolts unable to be removed. There is a broken gear inside. The equipment can be operated by being pushed. A decision needs to be made on the old wooden balance beams. Cllr Jones spoke to Jamie Parsons who will take a mini digger on site, and attempt to pull the post out. Cllr Walker advised that the spring for the gate has been sorted.

(b) The Paddock Bank-Cllr Martindale along with Alison Bockh has drafted a species report of the wildflowers present and signs have been erected along with an explanation board. An article has been drafted for Dolton and Dowland Diary for August. Dolton now has two recognised wildflower sites, supported and maintained by the village (see Dennis Cross Playground (c) below). All Cllrs were unanimously in favour of the draft article to be submitted.

(c) Wild flower area-Dennis Cross Playground-Cllr Martindale-draft species report (as (b) above).

(d) Weed Clearance for block paving near village notice board– Cllr Martindale. Various methods were discussed with a view to avoiding any chemical weed killer, these included vinegar based solutions. Certain pieces of equipment were suggested but it was felt that due to cost and health and safety aspects, with some equipment being quite aggressive and holding no long term solution, this was best avoided. Although no definite conclusions reached, it was felt that constant 'little and often' either manually, or with a chord strimmer, would probably be the best practice. It was suggested that perhaps this could be added to David Lock's contract. It was unanimously decided to revisit in September.

(e) Memorial Bench –Cllr Walker confirmed that permission from relatives is being obtained to relocate the Ethel Turner bench from the village hall carpark to Barfield Road.

(f) Village Flower Tubs- Following a request published in the Dolton & Dowland Diary, two volunteers have come forward; George Stephen and Alison Bockh**.** Cllr Moore offered to oversee and work with the volunteers. Cllr Tremayne suggested as the provision of water to the tub location is an issue perhaps purchasing a portable water container could be considered.

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62 (26/27) MAINTENANCE AND TRAFFIC ISSUES:

(a) Traffic Monitoring Equipment-Following receipt of an email last month from parishioner Barry Hunt, who raised concerns over the speed of some of the agricultural contractors passing through the village; Cllr Walker asked Cllr Jones if we still have the equipment. Cllr Jones advised that we no longer have it but it could be requested again, although when the speed watch group (now disbanded) were monitoring previously, there were no vehicles recorded as exceeding the limit.

(b) Road Warden – Cllr Jones has been approached by Simon Paine who has put himself forward to apply as a volunteer road warden. Cllr Jones has forwarded details of Devon County Council's Highway Maintenance Scheme for the clerk to follow up. Ward Cllr Lock urged DPC to check their insurance to ensure that there would be personal accident cover for a volunteer, and suggested if not, that perhaps independent insurance could be obtained by Mr Paine with the Council to reimburse.

(c) State of Roads – Landowner responsibilities – Cllr Jones**-**An email has been received requesting local Parish Council feedback highlighting the issues around lack of responsibility some landowners are taking with regards to boundary trees on public highways. There is a lack of awareness and accountability and how is this best approached. Cllr Walker has distributed a leaflet many times over the years highlighting this. Cllr Jones commented that contractors can carry out management on behalf of landowners but they will be charged for this. Clerk to put a reminder notice in the Dolton & Dowland Diary.

(d) Mesh core-Cllr Jones approached Ward Cllr Lock about locating this back onto the speed sign. It was felt that this might not be the best place. Cllr Rendell offered that he may be able to accommodate this on his property.

63 (26/27) VERBAL REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED, IF ANY: Cllr Jones – Sir Geoffrey Cox meeting (See 58 (26/27) above).

64 (26/27) ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD: None

Cllr Walker declared the meeting closed at 20:30

Signed…… Date……

Date of next meeting to be held in the Village Hall will be Monday 7th September 2026 (Unless planning details announced regarding the AI Data Campus and Battery Storage Site).