



Hemyock Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 14 May 2025
At Longmead Pavillion**

Present: Councillors P Doble (Chair), A Doble, Talbot and Summers together with MDDC Ward Councillor Natasha Bradshaw and Mrs McGeever (Clerk).

Apologies: Councillors Atkinson, Clist, Moon, Povah and Ward.

Councillor P Doble (Chair) opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed all those present from the parish including representatives from local organisations and groups to the meeting.

Chairman's Report

Good evening to you all Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Could all the Councillors please stand and introduce themselves to the Parishioners.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the Councillors who have supported me during the past year. We have faced some difficult and challenging decisions but we have achieved so much together and I am sure that we will continue to do so this year.

We have been very lucky in finding Sue, who took us on as a temporary fix but has thankfully decided to look after us permanently. Her knowledge, her guidance and her ability to lead and advise us we are grateful for and I know that we all want to say a big thank you for all her hard work in keeping us on the straight and narrow, and I know that it's not always an easy job!!

This year we have had resignations from Corinne Matthews and Penny Lawrence. They will both be sorely missed. But I do have to give a particular thank you to Penny. Her knowledge of the Council and its history and that of the village is second to none, as well as her personal support of me as Chairman. She will be hard to replace.

I would also like to give some special thanks to:

Nick Moon, our Vice Chair, who is nurturing the commons for us and their wonderful natural habitats, offering a home to wildlife as well as a tranquil area for parishioners to walk their dogs or have a picnic at The Turbery.

Lance Povah who has looked after our footpaths and organised the re-paving of the War Memorial.

Andrew Doble has become a Road Warden and assisting with the cemetery and has turned his hand to many things.

Simon Clist for keeping us up to date with MDDC news.

Stephen Ward who has helped manage Longmead and his help with safeguarding the trees in the village.

Stuart Summers who is assisting with the proposed Skatepark and has been a great help in modernising our financial system and, of course.

All our other councillors who spend many hours working on the various committees.

We would just like to welcome Kim Atkinson as a new councillor and look forward to working with her.

We are looking for a new Councillor to join us Any offers ?

Thank you to all the volunteers and leaders of various groups for all their work.

We had the sad loss of Stephen Lehner, who will be missed.

Local Government is not the easiest or the quickest to navigate. Sometimes it seems that nothing is happening but projects do happen!

This year, we have:

Started work to extend the cemetery and we are looking to give the Bier House a makeover, thank you to Ian Pike for keeping it looking pristine!

We have made improvements at the BHLAC and seen the community larder, which the Parish Council helps fund, go from strength to strength - the BHLAC would not run so efficiently without the dedication of Peta Dayus-Jones and her team. We say a big thank you to them.

Looking around Longmead today, you will see further ongoing improvements led by Andy Brooke's hard work and a band of volunteers. Also, the robot mower is now working, keeping the grass down to keep it tidy. We hope the Pavillion will be used more going forward.

We have seen the flood camera's installed at Culmbridge and on the Floodbridge by the old Milk Factory. They are very useful. DRIP have been helping to slow the water coming from the commons to help flood prevention. They generously supplied the cameras for the village.

The Royal British Legion did the Village proud with the VE celebrations last week, which everyone enjoyed. We thank everyone who was involved in the planning of the various events, it was a memorable celebration.

We are looking forward to Hemyock Day 2025 in June, which Sue Scantlebury as always, has well organised. Look forward to seeing you all at Longmead.

We currently have a problem with the re-routing of the buses on the High Street. We are working with the bus company to help resolve the issue.

This is not just a speech about looking backwards at our successes, it's also about looking forward and planning for the future.

Our short term plans include:

- Extending the car park at Longmead
- To put in a pavement at Station Road
- Extending the cemetery
- Recruiting new Council member
- Recruiting new speedwatch volunteers
- And of course signing off on the Community Land with Cavanna.

We also need to look at our longer term plans and have to consider how we look after and maintain our assets, such as Longmead and Blackdown Healthy Living Centre and how we ensure their future for the community.

We are happy to continue to support the Community Fridge in our future plans, as well as the Primary School's new playground and the Skatepark.

I hope that you will agree that we have achieved a lot over the last year, but the work isn't finished and there is a whole lot more to be done over the coming year. I would like to finish off with a thank you to everyone who supports us as a Council, who take the time to e-mail, or phone, or raise issues on our Facebook page and who come to our meetings. We are there for you as residents and we cannot do our job without you.

At the end of the report, Councillor Doble advised that the Parish Council wished to recognise individuals in the parish who had made a significant input to village life. Presentations of vouchers for the Catherine Wheel were made to:

Ian Pike for his work maintaining the village and the cemetery

Andy Brooke for his work on the Longmead Committee and refurbishing the pavilion.

Peta Deyus-Jones for her work at the Blackdown Healthy Living and Activity Centre and

Penny Lawrence for outstanding services as a member of the Parish Council for many years, her wealth of knowledge of both parish council matters and the history of the village will be sorely missed.

Presentation

Councillor Natasha Bradshaw gave a fascinating presentation on Climate Change and the Mid Devon district. The presentation can be found alongside the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting.

Councillor Bradshaw is the Cabinet Member for climate change, the environment and bio-diversity and MDDC produced a climate plan covering four years with an aim to being net zero by 2030. The strategy covers:

- Land space
- Renewable energy
- Carbon footprint
- How MDDC is contributing to climate change
- What actions could be taken to mitigate that contribution and
- How MDDC can adapt to climate change and become more resilient.

Exeter University had undertaken a study to show that agriculture produced 43% of greenhouse gas emissions whilst transport accounted for 29% and buildings 9%.

The 5 key areas being looked at were

- Vibrant landscapes
- Climate resilient communities
- Healthy homes
- Green growth and brighter futures
- Sustainable services and spending

Residents could become involved through Let's Talk Mid Devon.

Councillor P Doble thanked Councillor Bradshaw and noted that the Parish Council was looking to hold a separate meeting to give Climate Change the full focus it requires and how as a village, Hemyock can become more resilient and create a new Emergency Plan.

Members of the public raised questions relating to:

- Compulsory solar panels on new developments
- Increase affordable homes
- Increase bio-diversity
- The ability for developers to offset bio-diversity net gain in other areas of the country

- AD plants and the growing of power crops such as maize

Local groups then gave their reports and these are all given in the appendix to these minutes.

Councillor P Doble closed the meeting.

Appendix

Reports:

BLACKDOWN PARISH NETWORK

The Network was set up when the last discussions on devolution took place to give the Blackdown Hills its own voice and have all the parishes working together to achieve key needs such as broadband, traffic improvements including compulsory commercial satnav systems for lorries, river pollution and protecting the landscape.

The Network had met with the four local MPs; Rachel Gilmour, Richard Foord, Gideon Amos and Adam Dance to raise the issues in parliament.

The Network would like to see a community lift scheme and had purchased a heat sensor to help identify buildings that were losing heat.

The Annual General Meeting would take place on 16 July 2025 at Clayhidon Village Hall and focus on planning.

HEMYOCK COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH GROUP

The group called for volunteers to join the group to allow more sessions to take place in the village. Many residents considered speeding to be problem and the only way to reduce speed was to provide data to the police and Devon County Council Highways who were responsible for road speeds.

The figures for the past three months were:

Analysis of records for 01/01/2025 to 31/03/2025

No. of Speeders in 20mph limits	128	
Excessive Speeders Recorded (> 1.5*Limit)	8	
Max Speeder in 20mph limits	34mph	170%
Average Speeder in 20mph limits	26mph	130%
No. of Sessions in 20mph limits	13	
Avg no. of Speeders per Session	9	
Total number of Vehicles Passing	1611	
Avg Vehicles Passing per Session	123	
Avg % Speeders/Session	7%	
Session time at roadside	12.5Hours	
Avg Offenders per hour	10.2	
Vehicles without MOT	3	
Vehicles without TAX	2	
Vehicles on SORN	1	

The possibility of further Vehicle Activated Signs was raised and new models showed the driver their speed and also recorded data on the number of vehicles and the speeds.

The Community Speedwatch Group hoped for closer links with the Parish Council.

HEMYOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL PTFA

The PTFA worked to raise funds for largely non-educational needs of the children at the school and typically raised between £5-10,000 per year.

Their fete would be taking place on 7 June 2025 and would welcome the Parish Council's attendance.

HEMYOCK TENNIS CLUB Annual Report 2024 - 2025

Introduction

It may look on the surface that not much has changed in the year since last April, and yet in fact quite a lot has taken place. We have had a safeguarding visit from the LTA, more of which later, had a successful season of league tennis, and played a number of friendlies with Upton TC.

Thanks to a suggestion from Jo Benn and some committee members, cardio tennis was introduced in Autumn last year, and has been very well received, very well attended, and really taken off, so thank you to Jo for suggesting and promoting, and to Dan for his continued support.

There have also been some changes to the Longmead pavilion (and unfortunately to our financial contribution), some of which are ongoing and the full benefit yet to be realised.

Our traditional 'open day' was again subsumed into 'Hemyock Day'. This is good in some ways because of the footfall around Longmead on the day, and certainly attracts the youngsters and families. but perhaps there should also be a separate open day dedicated to attracting 'tennis' players.

At a recent meeting, the committee considered Padel and Pickleball. These are both rapidly growing in popularity - Padel particularly - and we have looked into ways of introducing them at our club. It seems that Padel is out of the question at present due to cost and it being played on a perfectly level court (our outside courts are 1-2% slope). However, Pickleball could quite easily be introduced and I have put this on the agenda for this meeting.

The courts are holding up quite well, notwithstanding that some serious weed control is required on the edge of court 3 to address the problem of mare's tail, and repainting is not a worry at present.

Fundraising for completion of the skatepark is now well underway. I believe the target opening is early 2027, but this is very much dependent on the success of grant application(s).

Safeguarding

The LTA carried out a safeguarding visit last year, and I'm very pleased to say that they found everything in order. A debt of thanks to Grant, who as safeguarding officer was able to draw on his ex-police work experience and provide enormous help to ensure that all of the relevant policies were reviewed and in place and that we were able to respond to robust questioning of our actions with regard to this increasingly important area.

Teams

We once more had 2 league teams entered into the WSMTL. A in Div 3, and B in Div 5.

A survived a play-off match to ensure their Div 3 status and B came in a credible 3rd place, one of three teams to reach more than 40 points.

Thanks are very much due to Karen and Malcolm for very ably captaining the teams - I know that they struggled for players, especially men, on one or two occasions, and the club is especially grateful and it gives huge enjoyment to those who play.

Social

Social events have been the 'strawberry tennis' and the 'mulled wine & mince pie' events. Thanks particularly to Julie for organising both and for chasing enough players to make both events worthwhile, and thanks to all those all helped. They were enjoyed by all those who took part, with the traditional bottle of wine for winners. We also had a New Year social evening in the Catherine Wheel with a few hands of skittles and a quiz arranged by Ian - Thank you Ian.

Coaching

Dan continues to take junior sessions each Thursday afternoons and numbers are holding up very well. Dan has also held camps during the summer and half term holiday periods and these are always oversubscribed.

There has also been adult coaching / rusty rackets sessions on Friday mornings throughout the year - thank you to Dan and for Julie for coordinating.

Dan has also remained available to members for one to one (or group) coaching on a privately arranged basis.

Committee

Finally, thank you to committee members for help and support throughout the year. Jerry will relate financial information in his report, but I'm indebted to Jerry for a number of tasks carried out such as updating membership information and setting up membership renewal details.

Club funds continue to be helped by 40 club income, so a big thank you to all supporters – if you've had a win this year, congratulations, if not, better luck this coming year! The club very much values your support.

Bob Hawkes

HEMYOCK YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB – AGM Report (2024–2025)

This season has seen a dramatic rise in participation, with the introduction of U6 and U8 teams. Our volunteer coaches now support a vibrant and growing membership, attracting players from surrounding communities including Honiton, Willand, Cullompton, and Churchinford. Over 100 players are signed on.

Across all age groups, the focus remains on inclusive, player-centered development. Highlights has been the rapid improvement in the u10s (including a cup run) and the U12 team securing promotion for the second consecutive season, underlining the progress and ambition being nurtured throughout the club.

As Chair, the most inspiring part of this role is seeing the outstanding behaviour and sportsmanship of our players and families. We frequently receive positive feedback from opposition teams and coaches, which is a testament to the values and standards upheld by our community.

Facilities Use & Community Impact

We remain committed to our agreement with the Longmead Management Committee (LMC), ensuring responsible and coordinated use of Longmead's facilities. A recent example was Saturday 10 May 2025, when we hosted home matches for the U8s, U10s, and U12s, alongside a volunteer-led kitchen that raised £180—a successful model we aim to extend.

We deeply value the supportive and effective working relationship with the LMC and our partnership with all Longmead user groups. This collaboration is key to sustaining a welcoming, multi-use community asset.

Investment in Facilities – Focus on the MUGA

The MUGA resurfacing project remains HYFC's top strategic objective. The current surface is well beyond its safe lifespan, limiting use and increasing liability. A new 2G surface would open access to year-round training and support other sports.

We have assessed the potential and believe a renewed MUGA could generate at least £25,000 annually in income, transforming Longmead's long-term financial position.

However, before launching any significant fundraising or planning effort, we are looking to the Parish Council for leadership and clarity regarding its role and contribution. We also look forward to attending a dedicated Parish Council meeting to support this process and share our findings.

Club Highlights

In May 2025, our U12s completed HYFC's first-ever tour, spending a memorable weekend competing in North Cornwall (Bude)—a milestone in the club's development and a proud moment for players, parents, and coaches.

We now turn our attention to our end-of-season presentation evening on 7 June, for which we've secured a temporary alcohol licence to help make the most of the newly refurbished facilities and ensure a community celebration of everything our young players have achieved.

On behalf of the committee, thank you for your continued support and collaboration. We look forward to building further success together. Dan Lyus, Chairman – Hemyock Youth Football Club.

Dan Lyus

LONGMEAD ENVIRONMENTAL AREA REPORT FOR THE PARISH AGM 2025

The Longmead Environmental Area continues to tick along, with some 400 volunteer hours being spent in tasks to help maintain and enhance it. With a constraint in public finances and a general downturn in available funds, there has been no opportunity to hold a tree hub this year. However, earlier planting and financial input is now evident in the maturing fruiting hedges.

The start of this year has been wet and the pond was full of frogspawn, but the last very dry six weeks has had an impact on the wildlife and the vegetables growing in the raised beds.

Winter was reassuringly cold with many days of low temperatures and frosts in the area.

Progress made this year

- The setting up of dry hedges to take the cuttings and brash and create a wildlife habitat
- Visit of the Scouts for a field crafts and knife skills session.
- Planting of spring bulbs.
- Maturing of the tree/hedge planting from previous years - some of which are fruiting.
- The completion of the bug house and creation of a living roof - it is home to a number of insects including some orange tailed bees.
- The purchase of new hand tools and a folding wheelbarrow.
- Community tidy ups
- Regular visits from Green Days adult day care charity who do all sorts of practical environmental work.

Challenges

- The need to find more local volunteers and a new coordinator.
- Petty vandalism - breaking of the compost bin , damaging of the bug house and removal of corrugated iron (the slow worm shelter), disturbance of nesting birds.
- Litter associated with the BMX track and the Purple Peril.
- Striking the balance between managing the area and ensuring that it is wildlife friendly.
- Sourcing funds for future projects.

Looking forward

- Himalayan balsam control.
- Using the money in account with HPC to provide willow structure courses and the possibility of a sculpture.

- Removal of some of the overhanging branches from the stream by the concrete bridge to let more light into the area.
- Scything areas of grass, to create different habitats.

I would like to thank all who have been involved in and supported the project once again this year, especially the volunteers from within the parish and the gardening group from Green Days, ever enthusiastic, who continue to be the source of much enthusiasm and hope for the area.

Trish Slater May, 2025