

**NOTES** of the Meeting of the **WHITCHURCH DOWN CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 5:30pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock

**PRESENT**

Councillors Mrs A Johnson (Chair), N Martin.

**REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES**

Representative of Plasterdown Parish Council – Councillor R Phillips and Councillor J Sturmer

Tavistock Golf Club – Mr G Raikes

Tavistock Cricket Club – Mr D Manning

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Carl Hearn, Town Clerk, Wayne Southall - General Manager, Laura Harley – Community & Compliance Officer.

Prior to the meeting, Councillor Johnson asked members of the consultative group to remember Andrew Jarman who had recently passed away. Mr Jarman had been a lifelong member and president of Tavistock Cricket Club. She thanked him for his contribution to cricket and to supporting the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group most recently by assisting with the Management Plan.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor B Smith, Becky Rowe – Works Manager.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Martin declared an interest in item 4c – Westcountry Rivers Trust.

**3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

a. The Consultative Group received and endorsed the notes of the meeting of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

b. There were no matters arising.

**4. REPORTS/DISCUSSION TOPICS**

The Town Council gave an update on: -

- a. **2026 Annual Open Day** – It was agreed that this should be postponed until 2027 with it explained that input and attendance from Dartmoor national Park was essential.
- b. **2026 Walkabout** – It was suggested that this should take place in either August or September and it was agreed that the Works Manager would send a round robin email to all to agree a suitable date.
- c. **Westcountry Rivers Trust** – It was explained that the Westcountry Rivers Trust had funded Grassland Soil Aeration which had recently taken place in three locations on Whitchurch Down. The aim was to loosen the soil on compacted ground to improve air circulation and increase water infiltration to reduce surface runoff and enhance flood resilience. It was noted that the work to the football pitch had already been undertaken and the cricket club had been in touch with the Trust to request that the area towards Chollacott Lane and the cricket pitch itself be subject to this process. The cricket club would be happy to fund this if it was proved to be of long term benefit.
- d. **Whitchurch Down Management Plan** – The plan had been approved subject to some amendments regarding text relating to boundary crosses on Whitchurch Down. Once the amendments had been completed the document would be published and circulated.
- e. **Tree Planting** – It was explained that several trees have been lost over the last couple of years due to storm damage and in response to this, four hawthorn trees had been planted around the Pimple. With regards to planting for 2026, the Works Manager has proposed a species recovery scheme using a selection of rare and native trees to support biodiversity, create wildlife habitats , reduce flood risks, improve soil stability and provide shelter for livestock. Two species of trees were suggested:
  - The Plymouth Pear – one of the UK’s rarest trees – a survey would have to be carried out to establish if the tree could be planted on Whitchurch Down. If so, it would best be sited in and around the quarry.
  - The Black Poplar – the tree thrives in wet conditions and floodplains so it was suggested that few be planted on Middlemoor.

Those in attendance were in support of the planting scheme suggestions.

## **5. REPORTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

- a. Whitchurch Commoners - not present – no report received.

- b. National Park Ranger – not present – no report received.
- c. Tavistock Cricket Club – An update was provided relating to the laying of the new artificial pitch. It was explained that there had been some concern from a resident about trenches made close to the gate and these had been refilled. The clubhouse had been tidied up to make it more welcoming. The new season was due to start and the club now had 12 teams including walking cricket. Thanks were passed to the Works Manager for her kind words regarding Andrew Jarman.
- d. Tavistock Golf Club – It was explained that the season was just picking up due to the adverse weather and that the greens were in a good condition. There had been a problem with anti-social behaviour near to the 9<sup>th</sup> tee and this had been reported to the police. The representative said they were looking into installing some solar panels using part of a Sport England grant.
- e. Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council – It was mentioned that some finger posts had been broken and these should be replaced by Devon County Council highways and that Drakes Café had been sold for residential use. Part of an 1843 map had been acquired and the parish council had received a grant to have it restored. The Council had hoped to acquire two telephone boxes but BT had decided to retain them. An update was provided relating to planning applications for the conversion of farm buildings and it was explained that three new boundary stones had been put in place.

## **6. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD**

There were no matters for discussion.

## **7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

The Meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Signed:

Dated:  
CHAIRMAN