Agenda Item 9c

NOTES of the Meeting of the **WHITCHURCH DOWN CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on Wednesday 7th October 2026 at 5:30pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs A Johnson (Chair), N Martin, B Smith.

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Representative of Plasterdown Parish Council – Councillor R Phillips and Councillor J Sturmer
Tavistock Golf Club – Mr S Getson
Tavistock Cricket Club – Mr D Manning

IN ATTENDANCE

Becky Rowe – Works Manager, Laura Harley – Community & Compliance Officer.

1. APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIRMAN

Cllr Martin was appointed as chairman (proposed Cllr Johnson, seconded Cllr Smith).

2. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Phillips was appointed as vice chairman (proposed Cllr Johnson, seconded Cllr Sturmer).

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Wayne Southall – General Manager.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. 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 7th April 2026.

b. The 2026 walkabout had not taken place in August/September 2026 and the Works Manager agreed to circulate a date for the end of October (noting that half term was w/c 26th October).

The Whitchurch Down Management Plan had been bound and circulated. Stakeholders thanked the Works Manager for all of her hard work in researching and drafting the document.

6. REPORTS/DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Town Council gave an update on: -

a. **Soil Aeration Management** – The Westcountry Rivers Trust who had funded the recent soil aeration work was pleased with the outcome which had resulted in greater water filtration. Funding was available to carry out further work on the football pitch, the area of moorland opposite which leads to Middlemoor as well as the area adjacent to the Cricket Club (which had not be included in the original scheme).

   The work is anticipated to be carried out either autumn 2026 or spring 2027.

b. **Tree Planting** – It had been hoped that a Plymouth Pear could be planted on Whitchurch Down, however the application to the supply nursery in the south west was unsuccessful as the planting was restricted to very specific sites. It was hoped to proceed with the planting of some Black Poplars during the 2026/27 winter dependant on supply.

   It was noted that a number of planted and self seeded Hawthorn Trees were doing well, as well as the other trees that planted at the start of 2026.

c. **Gorse Management –**The Works Manager confirmed the Works Department team would focus their efforts on a specific area near the pimple this winter period in order to tackle the dense, thorny and impenetrable thickets that have grown as an aggressive rate. It was noted the area previously identified off Furzy Lane would continue to be maintained by an external contractor, whilst the Commoners and Golf Club would continue to do their areas of responsibility.

d. **Cricket Club Complaint** – The Works Manager had received a complaint from a local resident regarding the large number of cars which parked at the Cricket Club, and subsequent damage to the moorland. The Cricket Club representative agreed that Friday nights were very busy with around 90 people training at the club however the ground recovered by quickly from any potential damage that may be caused by vehicular movement and any long term damage was picked up for reinstatement by the club at the end of the season. Stakeholders discussed the concern at great length and it was agreed there was no

alternative parking arrangements that would not adversely impact others within the community. It was noted the success of the club was hugely beneficial to the wider demographic the club supports through its activities in terms of health & wellbeing as well as social interaction. Stakeholders agreed to monitor and review the situation.

7. REPORTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

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

b. National Park Ranger – not present – no report received.

c. Tavistock Cricket Club – No external works were planned for the winter period. It was noted the club now had a record number of 14 teams of both genders and all ages, with a surge in the female demographic as well as the introduction of a team playing walking cricket. Both the men's first and second teams had been promoted and there was also a regular third team playing on a Saturday.

d. Tavistock Golf Club – The Golf Club now had 500 playing and 200 social members. It was reported, the club had a significant concern pertaining to the third green which regular floods. A site meeting with stakeholders to review and discuss would be scheduled to coincide with the walkabout.

e. Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council – Several members of the council had attended the DALC meeting where the potential changes to local government were discussed. Four agricultural planning applications had been considered and supported but an objection had been made to a change of use for a former café/pub within the Plasterdown Parish boundary.

   A grant application had been made to refurbish the Sawbridge and Grimshaw leat which provided water for 30 farms in the local area, 2 of which bordered Whitchurch Down. The leat was 700 years old but had dried up due to the extensive hot summer and draught of 2026. A community interest company was to be set up to administer the grant application and management of the leat going forward.

   Some parishioners had applied for the previous pub/café at Grenofen to become an Asset of Community Value but this had been turned down by West Devon Borough Council.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that a drain cover by the Pimple was missing and that the Town Council had placed a slab over it pending a permanent replacement by South West Water.

The Goose Fair Park and Ride site on Whitchurch Down would be in use on 14th October.

The bank that had been built around the car park at Furzy Lane had dried out over the summer and unfortunately whilst still present had not made the impact originally hoped for.

The livestock water trough at the Pimple was deteriorating badly, which the Works Manager advised the Council would repair over the winter period.

A report from a member of the public was bought forward to the group which involved them being questioned and accused of breaking the law by another member of the public due to them collecting horse manure to feed their garden.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 6th April 2027.

The Meeting closed at 6.15pm.

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN