**2026/01**

# MINUTES
# DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL
https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 in Defford Village Hall at 7pm

**PRESENT:** Chairman I Stephens, Vice Chairman S Rees, Cllrs: D Lamont, L Peake J Robinson and I Spiers and District Cllr P Middleborough

1. **APOLOGIES** were received from Cllrs. G Marshall and County Cllr A Hardman

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
   - *a) Cllrs are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.*
   - *b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
   - *c) To declare Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
   - *d) Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the clerk at least 4 clear days prior to a meeting.*

   *Cllrs who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items.*

   ***None Declared***

***PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:*** **Nothing recorded**

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meeting 19th November 2025. Acknowledged incorrect road name Agenda item 4 (c) to be amended, proposed approval Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Spiers – all in favour

4. **FINANCE / GOVERANCE:**
   a) Approval of receipts and payments to 13th January 2026 (made since last meeting)
   Payments for authorisation:

| | |
|---|---|
| Lengthsman October | 240.00 |
| Service Charge | 6.00 |
| Clerks PAYE | 326.82 |
| Clerks Expenses | 15.00 |
| Clerks Salary | 391.92 |
| Waste Bin Emptying | 233.69 |
| Hall Hire | 20.00 |
| Lengthsman November | 250.00 |
| Service Charge | 6.00 |
| Clerks Salary | 391.92 |
| Clerks Expenses | 15.00 |

Payments approved, proposed Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Spiers – all in favour
Receipts:

| | |
|---|---|
| Donation A Hardman | 100.00 |
| Lengthsman September | 240.00 |
| Interest | 153.68 |
| Lengthsman | 250.00 |

b) Account Balances:
Unity Trust Current Account: £3,895.76
Unity Trust Savings Account: £27,313.35

c) Budget / Precept Request 2026/27 – A draft budget / precept request had been shared with Cllrs prior to the meeting for consideration and to make comment. No comments were made before or during the meeting, and a proposed total budget of £25,242.00 was approved, proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded by Cllr Rees – all in favour. This would be a 10.9% increase and a monetary value of 43p per month for a Band D property. It is recorded that the increase included funds towards a Neighbourhood Plan.

d) Policies – the clerk would be reviewing all policies which would be shared with Cllrs for review between meetings.

e) Merger of Defford & Besford parish councils – this had been discussed at length in the past, merging Defford & Besford parish councils from a governance aspect that there is no division of 6 Cllrs for Defford and 3 for Besford (as is currently). Clerk to ask if there is any cost to the parish council for an initial consultation with residents.

**5. COUNTY & DISTRICT CLLR REPORTS** are annexed to these Minutes.

**6. PLANNING:**

a) Neighbourhood Plan - Cllrs were in agreement to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan Neighbourhood Plan to enable the community to shape and guide development within Defford & Besford. To be progressed once the outcome of the revised SWDP has been published. If parishioners are interested in getting involved please contact the clerk.

b) SWDP Review – This is hoped to be signed off by the end of March. The parish council would make comment on sustainability and lack of public transport.

**c)** W/26/00023/FUL Shazam, Upper Street – Full Planning for 3 dwellings and associated works on land to rear of Shazam and alterations to existing dwelling – Discussion took place and Cllrs agreed that this amended application was much improved and were happy to support it, however, comments would be made regarding a request for stringent checks to be carried out re drainage of surface water ND clarification of points raised within the Design Statement

**7. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS**

a) Public Rights of Way – *Nothing* to report

b) Lodge Hill - - Clerk to report faded line markings to WDC

c) Pedestrian Barrier – a request for a 'straight' pedestrian barrier Main Street / The Acre

**7. REPORTS:**

a) Lengthsman – Cllr Lamont reported the LM continues to work diligently

**8. CLOSED CHURCHYARDS – DEFFORD & BESFORD:**

**a)** Church Wall – some remedial works had been carried out in the wall, however some small cracks were appearing. Clerk to send photos to contractor for opinion and quote for final stage of repair.

**b)** Headstones – the clerk reported on the recently received communication from one of the Church Wardens and the Diocesan Registrar Senior Associate. A response had been drafted, accepting responsibility and offering to pay for the reinstatement of the headstones. This was a move that was supported by 4 Cllrs, and opposed by 2 Cllrs. The clerk to send response.

**9. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS:** These had all been shared with Cllrs.

**10. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Notice boards to be re-furbished – Clerk to chase the LM

**2026/03**

- Neighbourhood Plan

**11. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING –** Wednesday 18th March 2026 at Defford Village Hall – to also include Annual Parish Meeting