

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 9th JANUARY 2025 at 7.00pm at OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Lindsey Parsons (Chair), Tina Gardener (in the absence of the Clerk T Gardener took the minutes), Connie Sanders, Steve Parker, Mike Haycraft, Dave Dodge, Mike Caswell, and five members of the public.

001/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Carol Bradbury, Gina Mear and Cllr Brian Bolt

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were no declarations of members' interests. Member's Interests are disclosed at the time of taking Office. This information can be viewed on the Somerset Council website.

PUBLIC SESSION (INCLUDING SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

1. Somerset Council members report

- Cllr Mike Caswell will chase up Homes in Sedgemoor regarding the garage in Brookside, they promised to reinstate the garage and contents.
- Regarding the flooding at Brookside Road, the drains and culverts are blocked and it needs to be resolved.
- Sir Ashley Fox MP has taken up the cause of flooding in Somerset.
- The Highways department has had major staffing cuts.
- The footpaths in Estuary Park are not considered urgent and will be monitored.

2. Public

- A member of the public reiterated the flooding problems and a solution needs to be found urgently
- The Environment Agency used to dredge the brook
- Pedestrians crossing the road at Dame Withycombe Villas – this is very dangerous and needs to be addressed. Cllr Brian Bolt is pushing Highways for a solution.

002/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12.12.24

The minutes of the Meeting held on 12.12.24 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

003/25 MATTERS ARISING – NOT COVERED BY A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM

- 20mph speed limit for Combwich– An enquiry has been made to Highways
- Bridgwater Angling Association will be contacted and a site meeting arranged to discuss the overhanging trees from the ponds into residents' gardens.

004/25 PLANNING MATTERS:

- a. 39/24/00010/FHY Erection of a single storey extension to NW elevation on site of existing annex, to create accommodation to be used as holiday let or HPC workers. 20 Brookside Road, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2QW. PERMISSION GRANTED

005/25 FINANCE:

1. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Statement for December 2024

The budget statement and bank reconciliation for December 2024 was circulated prior to the meeting and was agreed. The balance at the 31st December 2024 was £57,121.99 including reserves of £22,060.63.

2. The following payments were AGREED:

- a) G Mear - £597.38 (Clerk salary – December 2024)
- b) Nest - £61.82 (Pension contribution)
- c) Otterhampton Village Hall - £12.00 (Hall Hire – Community Shop)
- d) Otterhampton Village Hall - £16.00 (Hall Hire – Steart Forum)
- e) Somerset Council - £352.80 (Grass Cutting)

- f) SALC - £35.00 (Training)
- g) Mike Ingram - £695.00 (Bramble clearing)

3. Income Received:

- a) None

4. Precept for 2025/26

After considering our current financial position T Gardener proposed to keep the Precept at £26,000.00 for 2025/26. This was seconded by M Haycraft and agreed unanimously.

006/25 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

An SPS bus recently collided with the bus shelter

007/25 HIGHWAYS

- a. The rules for using the Slinky bus have now changed. You are eligible to use it if you have your own transport.
- b. Cllr M Caswell reported that Somerset County are allocated funds to subsidise rural bus services and he has taken up the issue with our MP.

008/25 WHARF ROAD

Correspondence has been received from a resident regarding the lack of tree planting. This has been an on-going issue and it was felt that tree planting on the left-hand side of the Wharf was difficult having the brook on one side and a road on the other. The council was working with the Quantock Hills Landscape Officer but the trees suggested were not agreeable to the council as there were concerns raised about long-term maintenance and possible damage to the road. D Dodge kindly agreed to plant and care for a Rowan tree. From March to April the area is covered by brambles. The right-hand side will be tidied up by the Community Payback team under supervision. The council has been actively planting trees elsewhere in the village.

It was agreed to resurrect the tree committee, with R Perrett, M Haycraft, C Sanders and D Dodge to consider a long-term planting strategy. There is a budget provision of £2,500.

009/25 ENHANCEMENTS

Use of Pesticides – D Dodge has written an article on this for the next addition of Otter Tales. It was agreed to no longer use glyphosates in the Children's play area and for the weeds to be removed by hand.

010/25 SALC – COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Steve Parker reported that he had spoken with SALC and he is liaising with the Art Group and Gardening Club to put in a funding bid.

011/25 EMERGENCY PLAN

The emergency plan had previously circulated to all councillors and was agreed. 380 copies will be printed and distributed with the next edition of Otter Tales.

012/25 WELCOME PACK

The welcome pack has been circulated to councillors for comments and updated.

013/25 FLOODING

- a) Emergency Flood Store – Homes in Sedgemoor has agreed to reimburse the Parish Council for all items taken from the garage as per M Caswell phone call from HIS. We are still waiting on a formal response from them.
- b) It was agreed to contact the tenant farmers to the rear of 40 to 54 Brookside Road regarding the ditches in the field.

014/25 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (B Birkenhead) – Nothing to report.
- b. OPRA (T Gardener) – Nothing to report
- c. Steart Ward (D Dodge) – There is a common misconception that if a dog messes off the footpath in the countryside, then it is fine as nature will break it down and indeed National Trust sites have a policy of stick and flick (find a stick and flick it off the footpath) and that works well in a NT Park but not in a farming community where there are cattle and sheep.

- d. Social Media (D Dodge) – Discussions took place regarding a logo for the Parish Council. D Dodge and S Parker would liaise. Parish Online offer a .gov website for Parish Councils with up to 20 email addresses costing between £315 and £700 per year, Further research is required.

015/25 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

- a. OVH – 14.01.25
- b. EDF Community Forum – 16.01.25
- c. Dowsborough LCN – 29.01.25
- d. Local Plan workshop 25.01.25

016/25 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Somerset Council – There will be new prices for dog and litter bin emptying charges from 01.04.25. The cost is increasing from £2.86 per bin per empty to £6.50. These charges will only apply to bins not on land owned by Somerset Council
- b) The shop steering group are applying for a grant and as they do not have a bank account, the Parish Council agreed to hold any monies on their behalf.
- c) West Monkton Parish Council are looking for donations for their Poppy of Honour Pavilion, via purchasing plaques. The Parish Council declined to contribute.

017/25 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 13th February 2025, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 9.20pm.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date 13th February 2025