

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 13th FEBRUARY 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 and four members of the public.

018/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Carol Bradbury, Gina Mear, Cllr Brian Bolt and Cllr Mike Caswell

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

- There were no members present

2. Public

- A resident of Stolford was concerned about the poor drainage from Stolford to Steart and was concerned that drainage ditches were not being maintained.
- Concerns were raised about the contamination of Steart Common from ammunition left in the area to be used by Bristol Port Authority for a new salt marsh. The area was previously from 1945 to 1947 as a driving range.
- Gary Perrett from the Shop Steering group stated that our village shop was closing on 31st March 2025. The Plunket Foundation has been approached for advice. He requested a meeting with members of the Parish Council. It was agreed to hold a meeting on Tuesday 18th February 2025.
- Mervyn Brown a former Parish Councillor and Vice Chairman sadly died earlier this week. Mervyn will be remembered for his loyal service to the Parish Council.

019/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 08.01.25

The minutes of the Meeting held on 08.01.25 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

020/25 MATTERS ARISING – NOT COVERED BY A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM

- The Emergency Plan was circulated with the January edition of Otter Tales. A comment had been received that we should refer to the emergency plan for Hinkley Point. A link will be added to the relevant website.
- 20mph speed limit for Combwich– An enquiry has been made to Highways and a response will be chased. Discussions also took place regarding the use of speed indicator devices and speed radar guns to monitor the speed of traffic.
- The Bridgwater Angling Association is still to be contacted for a site meeting to discuss the overhanging trees from the ponds into residents' gardens.

021/25 PLANNING MATTERS:

- a. 39/25/00001/SR Remove storm damaged area of a Giant Sequoia (T1) (TPO Ref T3) and reduce height of all remaining stems by up to 2m at Hill House Christian Centre, Otterhampton.
SUPPORTED
- b. 39/24/00011/ FHY Installation of 12 no panels above ground PV array at Coxs Farm, Steart.
PERMISSION GRANTED

022/25 FINANCE:

1. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Statement for January 2025

The budget statement and bank reconciliation for January 2025 was circulated prior to the meeting and was agreed. The balance at the 31st January 2025 was £56,51 including reserves of £22,060.63.

2. The following payments were AGREED:

- a) G Mear - £615.38 (Clerk salary – January 2025)
- b) Nest - £61.82 (Pension contribution)
- c) T Gardener - £122.00 (Printing of Emergency Plan and diary)
- d) T Gardener - £821.55 (2 x Pumps and hoses)
- e) Otterhampton Village Hall - £32.00 (Hall Hire – Community Shop)

3. Income Received: none

023/25 HINKLEY POINT C

- a. A notification has been received that a car has been reported in Estuary Park fly parking.
- b. It has been observed that HPC buses dropping off/picking up at the bus shelter are driving over the kerbs and churning up the grass area.

024/25 HIGHWAYS

- a. In the absence of Cllr Brain Bolt there was nothing to report.

025/25 WHARF ROAD

- a. A Rowan tree is yet to be planted.
- b. A suggestion was made to have community compost heaps along the left-hand verge. S Parker agreed to write an article for the next Otter Tales to gauge if there was any interest for this proposal.

026/25 ENHANCEMENTS

- a. Village Gardener – no update was available
- b. Use of pesticides – Although the idea of using a hot foam system to remove weeds was favoured by the council there had been no comments received following the article in Otter Tales. The Government is due to review the licence for Glyphosates in December 2025 and we will wait the outcome.
- c. Community Payback – It was agreed to ask them if they could paint the railings on the flood defence wall in Riverside.
- d. Brownie Copse
 - Tree planting – It was agreed that no further tree planting was required for the Brownie Copse. A disease resistant Dutch Elm will be sourced and planted on land adjacent to the copse.
 - Bench – The Brownies are reconsidering the position of a bench
 - Brambles – It was agreed that the brambles will be cleared twice a year in March and September.

027/25 SALC – COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Steve Parker reported that he has spoken again with SALC and was advised to put in a combined grant for £2,500 for the Art Group and Gardening Club. The project would need to be sustainable for the future and would be looking to the Parish Council or the Somerset Community Foundation for future funding.

028/25 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.

029/25 WELCOME PACK

The welcome pack requires further updating before it is available for circulation.

030/25 FLOODING

- a) Emergency Flood Store – Homes in Sedgemoor has revoked our current agreement (with no charge) giving us 30 days' notice to vacate. We have been offered a new tenancy agreement at £12.90 per week. All councillors agreed that this was not a viable option. Copies of invoices of items removed from the garage will be forwarded to HIS as they have agreed to recompense the Parish Council. The sand in the garage needs to be removed and transferred to the OPRA barn before 17.02.25
- b) A meeting was held with residents on 4th February 2025 and was well attended
- c) The Flood and Coastal Management at Somerset Council has agreed to carry out a CCTV investigation and jet the culvert running underneath 54 Brookside Road.

031/25 MEETING REPORTS

- a. The EDF Community Forum was held on 16.01.25 and was attended by Mike Haycraft. Items of note included the Flammanville power station (similar to HPC) in France is now operational, HPC should be operational by the end of the decade, concerns raised about convoys of buses, continued discussions on the alternative to an acoustic fish deterrent, and there is currently 12,000 employees working on site in a 24 hour period. The minutes will be circulated once received.
- b. The Dowsborough LCN was held on 29.01.25 and was attended by Tina Gardener and Connie Sanders. Most of the meeting was taken up with the local plan engagement. Concerns were raised about the relevance of the meetings and Parishes opportunities to influence the agenda.
- c. The OVH meeting was held on 04.02.25 and was attended by Lindsey Parsons. Among items discussed were; a new switch for outside the front door is to be sourced, stonework on the outside ramp needs to be repaired, new noticeboards are being erected in the hall and they are trying to find ways to utilise the hall more.

032/25 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (B Birkenhead) – Nothing to report.
- b. OPRA (T Gardener) – OPRA is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year and a series of events are being planned.
- c. Steart Ward (D Dodge) – Nothing to report
- d. Social Media (D Dodge) –
 - Further discussions took place regarding a logo for the Parish Council, it was agreed to allocate a maximum budget to engage a designer. A series of posters were circulated encouraging dog owners to be more responsible with binning their dog waste. It was agreed to commence a campaign on Facebook, issuing the posters at regular intervals to instigate a debate.
 - Investigations regarding a new website are on-going and Parish Online is the favourable option at present.

033/25 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

- a. OVH – 13.03.25
- b. Local Plan workshop - 25.02.25
- c. Dowsborough LCN Highways Working Group – 28.02.25
- d. Hinkley Point SSG - 03.03.25
- e. EDF Transport Forum - 13.03.25

034/25 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Broadband fibre optic connection – Openreach has no immediate plans (2 years +) to provide fibre optic for the village. Everyone is encouraged to register their interest with Openreach as this might improve the chance of getting fibre optic.
- b) Sir Ashley Fox MP – Bridgwater Constituency Parish Council Summit to be held at 9.am on 15.03.25 at The Green, Wembdon. Lindsey Parsons, Connie Sanders and Tina Gardener volunteered to attend.
- c) Somerset Prepared Resilience Workshop to be held on 25.02.25. No-one was available to attend.

035/25 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

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

The meeting finished at 8.50pm

Signed:

(Chair)

Date 13th March 2025