

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Wednesday 12 February 2025 in the Tithe Barn commencing at 7.15pm

5 February 2025

Members are hereby summoned to the above meeting of Fitzhead Parish Council to consider and resolve the business as set out hereunder. If you are not able to attend, please advise the Clerk.

Andrea Johnson
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

Pre-meeting Public Question Time

There will be a period of public participation, and members of the press and public are invited to address the Council. The press and public are not permitted to take part in the Council meeting. However, at the Chairman's discretion the meeting may be suspended occasionally to receive public comments and questions.

- 25/0043 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate.**
- 25/0044 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.**
- 25/0045 To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024**
- 25/0046 Matters arising from the meeting on 27 November 2024**
- 25/0046.1 To receive a verbal update on the repointing of the Pumphouse and repair of the roof
- 25/0046.2 To discuss parking at the Tithe Barn and agree any actions
- 25/0046.3 To note that the Clerk has been added to the bank accounts as a signatory
- 25/0047 To receive a verbal update from the Tithe Barn Management Committee**
- 25/0048 To receive a verbal update on the weekly inspection of the play area, pump house and defibrillator and agree any actions**
- 25/0049 To receive a verbal update on highway matters and agree any actions.**
- 25/0050 To receive and note the verbal Report from the Somerset Councillor**
- 25/0051 Finance.**
- 25/0051.1 To note the Bank Reconciliation at 31 January 2025
- 25/0051.2 To note that a precept of £14580 has been claimed.
- 25/0051.3 To appoint Jill Larcombe as internal auditor
- 25/0051.4 To note the income and expenditure v budget report
- 25/0051.5 To resolve to pay the listed payments totalling £1831.36

Tithe Barn - hire	November	20.00
Clerk expenses		14.36
Clerk Salary		560.00
HMRC - PAYE		140.20
SLCC	Membership fee	19.00
C Summers	Hedge trimming and ditch clearance	945.00
E Bool	Donation	25.00
Play Inspection Company	Annual Inspection	108.30

- 25/0052 To consider applying to the Somerset Rivers Authority for a grant and agree any actions**

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Wednesday 12 February 2025 in the Tithe Barn commencing at 7.15pm

- 25/0053 **Governance**
- 25/0053.1 To adopt the statement of internal control
- 25/0053.2 To review and agree the asset register
- 25/0053.3 To review and agree the risk register

- 25/0054 To consider the Local Plan call for sites and agree any actions

- 25/0055 To consider contributing material to the Fitzhead Magazine

- 25/0056 Matters for information only

- 25/0057 To agree a date for the next meeting

- 25/0058 To pass a resolution to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting due to Personnel Sensitivity

- 25/0059 To conduct the annual review of the Clerk's salary and agree any actions

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 27 November 2024 at the Tithe Barn, Fitzhead commencing at 7.15 pm.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Chris Summers (Chair), Cllr. Alison Kent, Cllr. Ian Coombes, Cllr W Jonas & Cllr. Martin Irish

In Attendance: Andrea Johnson (Clerk) & Cllr. Dave Mansell (Somerset Council) (from 7.32pm) and 2 members of the public

Absent: None

Public Speaking Time: Two members of the public raised concerns with the condition of footpath WG5/1 from Knight's Farm to Tipnoller Quarry, which is impassible along the Manor Farm section due to mud and/or slurry. Although footpath users are legally able to find a way around an obstruction, this is hampered by an electric fence. It was suggested that an onsite meeting be held with the local footpath warden. Cllr Kent will also speak to the rights of way team and Cllr Summers will speak to the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

24/0026 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate
None

24/0027 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.
Cllr Summers declared a pecuniary interest in the potential reimbursement of the costs of the hedge cutting carried out.

24/0028 Minutes of Previous Meeting
The minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2024 were **approved**, with one abstention due to absence, and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

24/0029 Matters Arising from the meeting on 21 August 2024

24/0029.1 It was noted that nothing had been received from the contractor approached about the repointing of the Pumhouse and repair of the roof. **Action:** Cllr Summers to follow up.

24/0029.2 Cllr Irish has trimmed back the overhanging branches near to the Monkey bars.

24/0029.3 It was noted that the Parochial Church Council had agreed to contribute £23.00 to the cost of producing the village newsletter, leaving a further £23.00. **Action:** Clerk to confirm to newsletter.

24/0029.4 Parking at the Tithe Barn was discussed. It was agreed to defer any decision to the next meeting.

24/0030 Tithe Barn Management Committee

The Councillors noted the latest minutes and accounts from the Tithe Barn Management Committee. Cllr Coombes outlined future planned improvements and events. It was noted that the previous issues with the heating had been resolved.

24/0031 Play Area and Pump House

There were no matters to note from the weekly inspection reports since the previous meeting, except for:

- the chains on the Traverse which are low and need replacing. **Action:** Clerk to obtain quotes;
- the nettles in the bottom corner need cutting. **Action:** Clerk to arrange.

Initialled.....

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

24/0032 Highway matters

Somerset Council has carried out jetting works, but more are required. Cllr Summers will contact the highways team at Somerset Council. There had been a further landslide in Tylers Lane, which was expected to take 7 days to clear.

24/0033 Local Government and Policing

24/0033.1 Cllr. Mansell (Somerset Council) provided an update on the current financial position at Somerset Council. Airband is still working to deliver services for Fitzhead. Somerset Council had issued a press release about the penalties for leaving mud on the roads and landowner responsibilities.

It was noted that the Somerset Rivers Authority would be launching a Community Flood Action Fund in December.

Concerns were raised about the design and cost of the footbridge being constructed to cross Hillfarrance Brook at Slapemoore to replace the old bridge that was washed away.

24/0033.2 Cllr Summers reported on the most recent LCN meeting.

24/0034 Planning

Planning applications 17/24/0006 and 17/24/007LB for the demolition of car port/storage building and erection of detached garage, with carport and storage, and ancillary accommodation above at Illex House, Washers Farm Lane were discussed. It was agreed that councillors would request a site visit and would then ask the Clerk to respond under delegated authority.

24/0035 Finance.

24/0035.1 The Bank Reconciliation Statement at 16 November 2024 was noted.

24/0035.2 The National Pay Award, effective 1 April 2024, was noted.

24/0035.3 It was unanimously **resolved**, to pay the following payments totalling £1,042.71:

Tithe Barn - hire	August meeting	20.00
Clerk Salary	September – November 2024	777.12
Clerk Expenses	September – December 2024	87.55
HMRC	PAYE	158.04

24/0035.4 It was noted that the ICO data protection fee of £35 would be paid by direct debit on 13 December 2024 and the Microsoft subscription of £79.99 by direct debit from the Clerk's credit card on 14 December 2024.

24/0035.5 It was noted that on 14 January 2025 Lloyds Bank would change the Treasurers Account to a Community Account and would be charging an account maintenance fee of £4.25 a month and £0.50 for each cheque paid out.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **resolved** to add the Clerk to the accounts as a signatory with a view to making online payments and thereby avoiding the cheque payment charges. **Action:** clerk to arrange,

24/0035.6 The draft budget for the financial year 2025/26 was discussed. It was noted that it included provision for a new laptop, and for the Council to fund hedge cutting and ditch clearance. It was unanimously **resolved** to adopt the budget as presented.

Initialled.....

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

24/0035.7 It was unanimously **resolved** to claim a precept from Somerset Council of £14,580. **Action:** clerk to arrange once the forms were available.

24/0035.8 Cllr Summers, having declared an interest, took no part in the discussion. The draft invoice for hedge cutting work carried out by Cllr Summers was discussed and it was unanimously **resolved** (with Cllr Summers abstaining) to pay it.

It was also unanimously **resolved** (with Cllr Summers abstaining) that Cllr Summers should carry out the hedge cutting work the following year.

24/0036 Local Plan engagement survey

The Local Plan Engagement Survey was discussed. It was noted that the pub was still showing as a village facility. Councillors did not see any merit in submitting a detailed response.

24/0037 Surface water drainage

Recent issues with surface water drainage were discussed. It was agreed that Cllr Summers should discuss these the landowner and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. It was agreed that in future the Parish Council might have to take action to clear debris to prevent flooding.

24/0038 Defibrillator checks

Cllr Jonas has previously been responsible for checking the defibrillator, but was not always available. It was agreed that arrangements would be made to add additional councillors to the website. **Action:** Cllr Jonas to arrange.

Cllr Jonas will provide a note of the checks she undertakes to the Clerk to add to the playground checks list. **Action:** Cllr Jonas and Clerk.

24/0039 Matters for information only

None

24/0040 Next quarterly meeting

It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting on 12 February 2025.

24/0041 It was unanimously **resolved** to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting due to commercial sensitivity.

24/0042 Website Accessibility

The quotes for ensuring the website is compliant with WAG2.2 were discussed. It was noted that it is likely to become a requirement for websites to be hosted on a .gov.uk domain in the near future and it was resolved to defer any decision on the website until that time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.41 pm.

Signed as a true and correct record by Cllr. Summers.....

Dated 12 February 2025.

Initialed.....

Fitzhead Parish Council – Quarterly Bank Reconciliation

Balance - 10 November 2024		£	Balance - 31/01/2025	
Current a/c Balance		13976.45	Current a/c Balance	12858.74
Deposit a/c Balance		<u>4833.85</u>	Deposit a/c Balance	<u>4861.67</u>
Total		<u>18,810.30</u>	Total	<u>17,720.41</u>
Plus receipts	Bank Interest	7.82	Plus unrepresented receipts	0
Less cheques/DD	Tithe Barn Hire	15.00	Less unrepresented cheques/DD	
	Tithe Barn Hire	20.00	Tithe Barn Hire	15.00
	Tithe Barn Hire	20.00		
	HMRC - PAYE	158.04		
	Clerk expenses	87.55		
	Clerk Salary	777.12		
	ICO -	35.00		
		<u>1,112.71</u>		<u>15.00</u>
Balance		<u>17,705.41</u>	Balance	<u>17,705.41</u>

Fitzhead Parish Council
Budget vs Precept for 2024/2025

Expenditure	2023/2024	Budget	Expenditure
	Actual	2024/2025	to Date
Administration			
Clerk salary	960.77	1910.00	2389.32
PAYE	640.40	485.00	561.24
Clerk Expenses	162.88	85.00	32.33
Hall hire	75.00	100.00	75.00
Payroll Supplier		0.00	100.00
Sub total	1839.05	2580.00	3157.89
Asset Maintenance			
Play Area Annual Inspection	82.50	90.00	90.25
Repairs - noticeboard		40.00	0.00
Play Area Maintenance	790.00	910.00	680.00
Play Area Repairs	120.00	110.00	0.00
Microsoft Office Subscription	66.66	90.00	66.66
New website		750.00	0.00
Defibrillator - Annual Support	135.00	145.00	135.00
Pump House maintenance	331.40		72.00
New Laptop			
Sub total	1525.56	2,135.00	1043.91
Training			
Clerk training	35.00	35.00	0.00
Councillor training		35.00	0.00
Sub total	35.00	70.00	0.00
Fees and Subscriptions			
ICO	35.00	40.00	35.00
Membership subscription	75.06	80.00	118.28
Domain hosting	10.00	12.00	10.00
Insurance	463.78	500.00	491.47
Audit Fees	27.50	50.00	0.00
Sub total	611.34	682.00	654.75
Donations			
	100.00	1295.00	574.86
Fitzhead PCC – burial ground maintenance	470.00	0.00	0.00
Fitzhead Cricket Club – ground maintenance	825.00	0.00	0.00
Sub total	1395.00	1295.00	574.86
Community Infrastrure			
Hedges & Ditches		2000.00	787.50
Total Expenditure	5,405.95	8762.00	6,218.91
Income			
Precept	5,500.00	13738.00	13738.00
Maintenance Grant	1,670.00		
Bank interest	44.46		45.26
Total income	7,214.46	13738.00	13783.26

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

1. Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, 2003 (as amended) imposes a duty on Fitzhead Parish Council to ensure that it has a sound system of internal control.
2. Fitzhead Parish Council is required to review the effectiveness of its system of internal control at least once a year, and to sign the annual governance statement (on the annual return submitted to the external auditor) to confirm that this review has been undertaken.
3. To review the effectiveness of the internal control system, Councillors need to understand what internal controls are in place. Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations, but the system of controls goes beyond this. Therefore, every year the Council prepares and approves a statement of the internal controls it has in place.
4. The previous Statement of Internal Controls was approved in February 2024.

Andrea Johnson
Responsible Financial Officer
12 February 2025.

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The following Statement of Internal Control was considered by Fitzhead Parish Council at its meeting on 12 February 2025 and approved by the Council as a true statement. Having reviewed the Statement of Internal Control, it was RESOLVED that Fitzhead Parish Council considers the current system of internal control to be effective.

1. Scope of Responsibility

Fitzhead Parish Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

3. Responsibility for the Internal Control Environment

a. The Council:

The Council has made and will keep under review Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. The Council's system of Internal Control is ancillary to and underpins the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders but goes beyond their requirements.

The Council has appointed a chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of its meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful. The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and budgets at the level of precept required for the following year at its November or December Meeting. The approved annual budget forms the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

The Council meets at least 4 times each year.

b. The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk of the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

c. Councillors:

Each member must complete a Register of Interest form. Members ensure that any interest is declared at the beginning of the meeting or before the matter is discussed.

d. Internal Audit:

The Council agrees the appointment of an independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its systems and procedures, internal controls and risk management and its reviews of these matters. The reports of the Internal Auditor are considered at a full council meeting.

4. Financial and Accounting Procedures

a. Financial Regulations

The Council has adopted Financial Regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC. The Financial Regulations will be reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Council at least biennially. The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work.

b. Payment Signatories:

Payments are listed and presented at the council meeting and approved by Council. Two Members of Council must sign every cheque and the signatories also initial the cheque stubs. Where online payments are made, the Clerk and one councillor must authorise the payments.

c. Payroll:

The Clerk is paid under PAYE as an employee quarterly. All salary payments are presented at the council meeting and approved by Council. The Clerk ensures that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC by submitting directly.

d. Expenses:

Requests for reimbursement of monies are listed and presented at the council meeting and approved by Council. Copy receipts for goods or services purchased are provided for reference. Mileage at an approved rate is paid to the Clerk.

e. VAT Repayment Claims:

The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Council and proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable. The RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed at least once a year and reconciles the VAT payment when received by BACS payment.

f. Income:

The RFO ensures that amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the Unitary Authority and ensures that the precept payment is received when due.

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

g. Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations

The cash book is maintained by the clerk. The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement quarterly. The bank reconciliation statement is reported to the Council quarterly.

h. Budgetary Control

The RFO will ensure that all entries in the cash book are endorsed within the correct budgetary centre. A budget report is reported to the Council quarterly.

5. Asset Management

The Council's Asset Register is reviewed on an annual basis by the Council. The adequacy of insurance of the Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.

6. Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

Councillors carry out weekly risk assessment of the Play Area, Pump House and defibrillator. The asset register and inspection schedule are updated as required and reviewed at least annually.

Fitzhead Parish Council Asset Register

Description	Identification	Comments	Value
1 notice board	Outside Fitzhead Inn	Disposed of - dilapidated beyond repair	£75 Purchased March 2003
1 notice board (recycled plastic)	Outside Fitzhead Inn		£1211.21 Purchased March 2023
Pump House	Fitzhead bus shelter		£1
Metal Filing Cabinet	At Clerks Address		Purchased Sept 2007 for £150
Play Equipment Purchase x 2 sets of Swings	Play Area – Church Road		Purchased May 2017 £4,492
Defibrillator	Outside Tithe Barn		£1,750.00
Play Equipment Purchase 1 x monkey bars frame, 1.5m tower with slide, climbing wall and fireman's pole	Play Area – Church Road		£6,940.00 Installed December 2021.
Laptop for Clerk's use	At Clerk's Address		£199
Seat - recycled plastic (Sue Bellamy)	Church Lynch Gate		£500
Picnic Bench – recycled plastic	Play Area		£500

**FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL
RISK ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE - February 2025**

Parish Council Risk Schedule			
Item	Frequency	Last Reviewed	Comments/ Actions
Parish Council Insurance , including:	Annual	May 2024	Annual premium paid – agreed 3 year LTA – review 2026
Public and Employers' Liability	Annual	May 2024	
Money and Fidelity Guarantee	Annual	May 2024	
Personal Accident	Annual	May 2024	
Buildings Cover for Parish Owned Property/Community Assets	Annual	Aug 2012 Aug 2023	Tithe Barn valuation Pump House valuation
Inspection of Playground Equipment by Qualified Inspector	Annual	Dec 2024– The Play Inspection C.	Review Report and agree actions May 2025
Other Inspections/Maintenance:			
Inspection of Playground Equipment by Parish Council	Weekly (members)	On-going	PC responsibility
Inspection of Pump House	Weekly (members)	On-going	PC responsibility
Defibrillator	Weekly (members)	On-going	PC responsibility
Financial Matters:			
Banking Arrangements	Annual	On-going	
Insurance Providers	Annual	May 2024	Due June 2026
VAT Return Completed/Submitted	Yearly	February 2025	VAT Return done up to January 2025.
Additional Audit Fee	Annual	n/a	
Annual Salary Review	Annual	Feb 2025	
Other:			
Budget Agreed, Monitored and Reported	Annual	On-going	Reported at each quarterly meeting
Precept Requested	Annual	Somerset Council – January 2025	Receipt acknowledged
Payments Approval Procedure	Annual	On-going	Cheques signed at meetings by 2 signatories
Bank Reconciliations Overseen By Councillors	Annual	On-going	Bank reconciliation reported at meetings
Use of Home as Office Allowance	Annual		Not claimed.
Chairman's Allowance Reviewed and Agreed	Annual		Not claimed

Members' Allowance Reviewed and Agreed	Annual		Not claimed
Internal Audit	Annual	May 2024	Reviewed May 2024
External Audit	Annual	N/A	
Record Keeping:			
Minutes Properly Numbered etc	On-going		Numbered
Asset Register Available/Updated	On-going	Feb 2025	
Financial Regulations Available/Updated	On-going	Aug 2023	Next review Aug 2025
Standing Orders Available/Updated	On-going	Aug 2023	Next review Aug 2025
Back-up Taken of Computer Records	Quarterly		Cloud storage
Employees and Contractors:			
Contracts of Employment	Annual		On File
Contractors' Indemnity Insurance	On-going		
Written Arrangements with Contractors	On-going		
Members' Responsibilities:			
Code of Conduct Adopted	On-going	Aug 2022	
Register of Interests Completed and Updated	On-going	Aug 2022	
Register of Gifts/Hospitality	On-going	Aug 2022	
Declarations of Interests/Dispensations Minuted	On-going	When applicable	

The information given above was agreed at the Meeting held on 12 February 2025 as being a correct record.

Signed: Date:

Chairman

Clerk: Date: