

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.

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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 Ilex 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.

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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.....