

# FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 12 February 2025 at the Tithe Barn, Fitzhead commencing at 7.15 pm.

## MINUTES

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

**In Attendance:** Andrea Johnson (Clerk) & Cllr. Dave Mansell (Somerset Council). No members of the public

**Absent:** Cllr W Jonas

**Public Speaking Time:** No members of the public were present

**25/0043 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate**  
None

**25/0044 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.**

Cllr. Summers **noted** that he had a financial interest in the payment authorised at the November meeting for hedge and ditch cutting, which on the schedule for payment.

**25/0045 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**25/0046 Matters Arising from the meeting on 27 November 2024**

25/0046.1 It was **noted** that nothing had been received from the contractor approached about the repointing of the Pumphouse and repair of the roof. **Action:** Cllr Summers will source alternative quotes.

25/0046.2 It was **noted** that the verges around the Tithe Barn up to the walls are owned by Somerset Council. If the Parish Council wishes to apply materials to allow hard standing for vehicles, it must have written permission from Somerset Council. The only alternative is to commission the work through Somerset Council's Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme. It was unanimously **resolved** that initially the Parish Council would arrange for the brambles growing on the verges to be cut back.

25/0046.3 It was **noted** that the Clerk has been added to the bank accounts as a signatory to facilitate online banking. The current cheque signing mandate had been replicated, with two signatories required for payments.

**25/0047 Tithe Barn Management Committee**

The Councillors noted the latest minutes and accounts from the Tithe Barn Management Committee. Booking and revenue have increased. Cllr Coombes outlined future planned improvements and events. Councillors expressed their appreciation of all the hard work Cllr Coombes does on behalf of the Tithe Barn Management Committee.

**25/0048 Play Area, Defibrillator and Pump House**

There were no matters to note from the weekly inspection reports since the previous meeting.

**25/0049 Highway matters and Rights of Way**

It was **noted** that the restrictions applying to work on the highway do not apply to work on hedges and ditches.

Three issues with rights of way had been reported to Somerset Council as follows:

- WG5/1 Manor House Farm. As discussed at the previous meeting in November 2024 the footpath was obstructed with deep mud and slurry due to livestock feeding and agricultural vehicles. Reported 25 November 2024.

Initialed.....

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- WG7/31 Dean Farm. The footpath has been obstructed by a new wire fence and homemade stile has been placed off the definitive path. Reported 10 February 2025
- WG5/5 Pond Close (Halse). The outlet pipe from Eastern Pond is blocked causing water to overflow onto the footpath.

## 25/0050 Local Government

Cllr. Mansell (Somerset Council) provided an update on the current restructure and financial position at Somerset Council. The deadline for setting a balanced budget is 11 March.

Somerset Council had cleared and jetted the gullies in Fitzhead around Washers Farm, Knights Farm and Half Yard and were currently planning to do so every 2 years. Examples of any gullies which had not been cleared and/or jetted should be sent to Cllr Mansell. Cllr Summers confirmed that no jetting had taken place in Higher Fitzhead on Halse Road, beyond Hills Cottages.

The ditches alongside Church Road were still to be ploughed, this was scheduled for March but is now more likely to be in the summer. The contractors have no means to dispose of the waste soil. It was noted that if the Parish Council can be advised in advance of the dates of the work, councillors may be able to arrange for the soil to be removed.

## 25/0051 Finance.

25/0051.1 The Bank Reconciliation Statement at 31 January 2025 was noted.

25/0051.2 It was noted that a precept of £14580 has been claimed.

25/0051.3 It was unanimously **resolved** to appoint Jill Larcombe as internal auditor

25/0051.4 The income and expenditure v budget report was noted.

25/0051.4 It was unanimously **resolved** (with Cllr Summers abstaining) to pay the following 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 Somerset Rivers Authority grant funding

The availability of the Somerset Rivers Authority grant funding was noted. The problems with run off from the fields was noted, but it was felt there was no obvious solution, although it could be alleviated by judicious use of farming practices.

## 25/0053 Governance

It was unanimously resolved to adopt the statement of internal controls, asset register and risk register.

Initialed.....

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- 25/0054 Local Plan call for sites**  
It was **noted** that opportunities for development in Fitzhead are limited by the lack of infrastructure, particularly the ability of the road network to cope with increased traffic. There will be an opportunity for the Parish Council to provide input later in the plan development process.
- 25/0055 Milverton & Fitzhead Magazine**  
It was **unanimously** resolved that as Cllr Jonas was on the editorial board for the magazine, she should include pertinent items from the minutes of the Parish Council meetings in the magazine.
- 25/0056 Matters for information only**  
None
- 25/0057 Next quarterly meeting**  
It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting on 21 May 2025, preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 6.45pm.
- 25/0058** It was unanimously resolved to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting due to personnel sensitivity.
- 25/0059 Clerk's salary**  
The Clerk's salary was reviewed and it was unanimously **resolved** to move the Clerk to SCP 14.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9 pm.

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

Dated 21 May 2025.

Initialed.....