

# NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

[www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk)

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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.00 pm** in the Palaiet Hall, Norton St Philip.

**Present:** Cllr Hasell (Chairman), Cllr Foster, Cllr Fox, Cllr Lund, Cllr Murfitt and Cllr Hitchins.

**In attendance:** Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk) and 7 members of the public.

## Public Participation

Members of the public were invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern:

- A number of residents had attended the meeting to discuss issues relating to recent flooding in the parish and the following points were made:
  - The recent storm had resulted in a significant amount of rushing water coming down Watery Lane, which had escalated extremely suddenly and been extremely powerful.
  - The brook at the rear of the Lane had not flooded and the water had been the run off from the local fields.
  - Residents had photographic and video evidence of the incident, which would be provided to the Parish Clerk.
  - Residents had tried to mitigate the impact of the flooding with sandbags and concrete slabs and it was agreed that the PC would explore the provision of sandbags via a central location for any future incidents.
  - It was reported that there had also been flooding in Ringwell Lane, which had been to an extent not previously experienced. This floodwater had also been run off from local fields and the Fortescue Fields ponds (which had overflowed).
  - It was noted that some of the local area had been flood plains in the past, but that much of these had now been lost.
  - Residents expressed grave concern over the impact of flooding on the electricity substation, which was a significant risk to public safety.
  - It was reported that the water run-off was not being diverted and that drains and culverts were blocked. SC had informed residents that these were scheduled for clearance every three years but it was agreed this was not often enough and that the suctioning carried out was not sufficient.
  - Cllr Fox provided information on a Fix My Street app, which would enable residents to report issues. The app would then identify the responsible Council and pass on the reports. It was agreed that information on this app would be published in the next edition of the Parish News.
  - The Chairman thanked residents for attending and providing their reports on the recent flooding. He confirmed that the PC would collate the reports and provide a

comprehensive report to Somerset Council also asking the Somerset Councillors to engage on the issue on behalf of the parish.

	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>
8869	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b> Cllr Walker, due to another commitment - accepted.</p>
8870	<p><b>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate</b> None.</p>
8871	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on <b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b> were approved for accuracy and adopted (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Fox).</li> <li>b) To consider any matters arising from the above meetings (if any): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cllr Fox spoke regarding minute reference 8886 and reported that Mr Travis had written to the bus service provider regarding the issues which the PC had raised at the January meeting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8872	<p><b>Council Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairman reported that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He had spoken with Cllr Hitchins regarding an access issue with the defibrillator, which had been reported via Facebook over the Christmas period. Cllr Hitchins reported that he had taken this up with Community Heartbeat and received some guidance which he would arrange for publication in the Parish News. He further reported that a defibrillator training session had been arranged for 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and information on this would also be published through the village. Members noted the regulations relating to how defibrillators could be accessed and the limits of the distance from the patient to the unit. Cllr Hitchins was exploring these matters further.</li> <li>○ The SC Executive was holding a meeting on 15 January 2024 at 10 am (hybrid meeting) at which the SC financial crisis would be discussed. A link to the relevant report had been circulated to members. The Chairman reported that SC was looking to approve a council tax increase of 9.99% however, this would not be sufficient to avert the crisis and consideration was therefore being given to approaching central government for a capitalisation direction in the amount of £20.8m. Should either of these be rejected then the Council would need to apply for a s114 notice, which would declare SC bankrupt. The Chairman drew attention to the vast projected budget deficits of £38m in 2024/25, £105m in 2025/26 and £137m the following year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Parish Clerk reported the following:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A meeting with the new Internal Auditor had been scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> January, at which the final arrangements for the change of banking provider would be made.</li> <li>○ Information on highway works in the village was being received from Gigaclear but not from Somerset Council, as had been promised. The Clerk would raise this with the Somerset Councillors.</li> <li>● County Councillors; Dawn Denton and Adam Boyden had sent apologies for absence. A report from Cllr Denton had been received and circulated in advance of the meeting.</li> <li>● Other Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Palaiet Hall – No report</li> <li>○ Church Mead Committee – No report</li> <li>○ Parish Path Liaison Officer – No report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8873	<p><b>Planning Applications, Appeals and Consultations</b></p> <p><b>2023/2350/HSE and 2023/2348/LBC</b>- Church Farm Church Farm Lane Farleigh Hungerford Frome - Proposed reinstatement of former north wing &amp; alterations to outbuildings – Support on the grounds detailed below (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Fox):</p> <p>This derelict Grade 2 house is in need of being cared for and lived in. The proposals in this application do much to preserve the main part of the house as well as restoring the west wing that was burnt down in 1945. This restoration will provide some west facing daytime living accommodation that will enhance the property significantly. There will then be a direct connection to the garden to the west of the house. The studio and other ground floor use of the outbuildings will also give much needed purpose to otherwise dilapidated structures. The applicant is maintaining much of the original footprint of the buildings and plans to do little to change the existing layout of the main part of the house. The applicant intends to make use of sustainable heating and insulation methods where feasible; enhanced biodiversity is intended in the garden which is at present laid mainly to lawn. The Parish Council therefore <b>supports</b> both these applications.</p> <p><b>Outstanding matters with the Local Planning Authority (Somerset Council)</b></p> <p>Members noted the below listed outstanding matters, on which responses were still awaited from SC. Members expressed their extreme disappointment at the significant delays in receiving responses to either matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Laverton Triangle TPO application – first submitted January 2023 and chased 7 times</li> <li>b) Outstanding planning applications – first queried September 2023</li> </ul> <p>Members also noted that update notifications on planning applications did not appear to be generated by the Planning Portal. Following debate, it was agreed to write a strong letter of concern to Somerset Council asking that the above matters be expedited and resolved as a matter of urgency.</p>

	To receive and consider planning applications received after the issue of the agenda ( <i>where the response time falls outside of the meeting schedule and an extension cannot be obtained</i> ) – None.						
8874	<p><b>Financials</b></p> <p>a) Council expenditure as listed was approved (proposed Cllr Hitchins, seconded Cllr Foster).</p> <p>b) Members noted and approved the Financial Position Statement December 2023 (previously circulated)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>N Duke</td> <td>Expenses January 2024</td> <td>£ 51.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td> <td>PAYE and NI</td> <td>£ 133.12</td> </tr> </table>	N Duke	Expenses January 2024	£ 51.98	HMRC	PAYE and NI	£ 133.12
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8875	<p><b>Parish Council Budget and Precept 2024/25</b> (papers previously circulated)</p> <p>a) Members discussed the draft budget for 2024/25, which had been circulated to members. Following debate, the budget in the amount of £54,747 was approved and adopted (proposed Cllr Lund, seconded Cllr Hitchins).</p> <p>b) Members discussed the level of the Council’s precept for 2024/25, having regard to the budget requirement as adopted under the previous agenda item. It was noted that the precept requirement stood at £54,747 which represented a Band D equivalent of £105.26 an increase of £1.31 per annum on the current year and a percentage increase of 1.26%. Following debate, the precept for 2024/25 was set at £54,747 (proposed Cllr Lund, seconded Cllr Foster).</p>						
8876	<p><b>Asset and Service Devolution</b></p> <p>No further updates.</p>						
8877	<p><b>Traffic Action Group</b></p> <p>Cllr Fox reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given that TAG met bi-monthly and there had been no meeting since December 2023.</li> <li>Although TAG had not elected a new Chair, four members were acting as rotating Chairs.</li> <li>An HGV incident had been recently reported and Cllr Fox reported the lorry watch system was working well.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Hasell reported that a previous councillor had provided him with factual information relating to the ownership of the pavement outside of the Old Shop on the High St (December minutes refer), which he passed to Cllr Fox. The information contained therein would be reviewed by the Chair and Cllr Fox who would then liaise with Somerset Council/Councillors to ask them to restate the SC ownership of the pavement to the property owner.</p>						

8878	<p><b>MDC Local Plan Part II</b></p> <p>Cllr Hitchins reported that the PC had now received the formal acknowledgement from the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the complaint submitted in December 2023. This had been circulated to members. Cllr Hitchins drew attention to the information contained within that acknowledgement regarding compensation claims and it was confirmed that the Clerk would progress an application for compensation, providing information on both objective and subjective costs incurred as a result of the PINS flawed examination of LPP2.</p> <p>The Chairman reported that he had attended the meeting of Beckington Parish Council the previous evening and spoken to the invoice which had been submitted to them for one third of the JR costs. It was confirmed that the payment of this invoice had been listed on the BPC agenda. Cllr Hasell reported that he had also spoken regarding the additional costs incurred (as detailed below) and had asked that BPC consider extending the resolution to cover one third of the JR costs to these costs also.</p> <p>The Chairman further reported that he had been contacted by Kilmersdon PC, which had concerns over the allocation of the 505, given their proximity to the B&amp;NES border and a potential site within its parish. The Chairman had had a number of conversations with the PC and had been invited to attend the next meeting, which he had agreed to do.</p> <p>It was noted that the notification of final court fees from DLA Piper had been received and copies had been circulated to members. The invoices in the amount of £5,730 inc vat were approved for payment (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox).</p>
8879	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan for Norton St Philip</b></p> <p>Cllr Hitchins provided an update reporting that the SEA/HRA Screening from Somerset Council had been received just prior to Christmas and that SC had concluded there was a requirement to undertake a Habitat Regulation Assessment and a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. Cllr Hitchins further reported that he and the Chairman were due to meet with the Locality appointed consultant before the end of the month to explore options for the progression of the Plan given this new requirement. A report would be submitted to the next appropriate PC meeting.</p>
8880	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>None</p>
8881	<p><b>Parish News</b></p> <p>The following items were agreed for inclusion in the next edition of Parish News. Members were asked to send any content to the Chairman by 17<sup>th</sup> January and it was confirmed a draft of the copy would be circulated to members for comment prior to issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget and Precept</li> <li>• Defibrillator as separate article</li> <li>• Flooding</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on the 'Fix My Street' app as reported by Cllr Fox</li> </ul>
8882	<p><b>Meeting schedule</b> Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Palairret Hall</p>
8883	<p><b>Confidential Information</b> In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted at Agenda Item 8884 members resolved that the press and public be excluded from this part of the meeting (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund). <i>Such a resolution was made in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2), which states "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies."</i> Reason for exclusion – Staffing Matters</p> <p><i>At this point the Parish Clerk left the meeting.</i></p>
8884	<p><b>Staffing Matters</b> Members considered the NALC/NJC National Pay Award for local government employees 2023/24 (previously circulated with report from the Staffing Committee). It was resolved to adopt the NALC/NJC National Pay Award 2023/24 and apply the NJC rates of pay for the period 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024 to the Clerks remuneration together with any associated back pay due (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund).</p>

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.10 pm.