

NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on
Wednesday 9th October 2024 at 7.00 pm in the Old School Room, Farleigh Hungerford.

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

In attendance: Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk), Somerset Councillor A Boyden and 5 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 resident addressed the Council to express objections to planning application **2023/1918/FUL** - Bell Hill Garage Bell Hill Norton St Philip Bath Somerset.
- A representative of Silverwood addressed the Council in respect of a potential planning application for land at Norton Farm (information on which had been previously circulated). An early engagement with the Council and the parish was sought and this was welcomed by the PC. Members drew attention to the need for any planning application to provide measures to deal effectively with flooding and ensure connectivity through the parish by way of footpaths.

	AGENDA ITEM
8997	Apologies for Absence None.
8998	Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate Cllr Hitchins reported that he had received a number of emails from the landowner of the Bell Hill Garage site; ones which had been relevant to the PC had been circulated.
8999	Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th September 2024 were approved for accuracy and adopted (proposed Cllr Fox, seconded Cllr Lund).b) To consider any matters arising from the above meetings (if any): None.
9000	Council Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chairman reported that the PC had now received notification of the next LCN meeting, which would be a hybrid meeting. Any member planning to attend was asked to let him know.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Clerk – reported that the agreement for the School Crossing Patrol had now been signed and the required Risk Assessment and Volunteer Agreements were held on file. The insurance requirements had therefore been met. • County Councillors; Cllr Dawn Denton had sent apologies for absence. Cllr Adam Boyden reported the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drew attention to two current SC surveys, links of which would be provided. ○ Reported that SC had submitted an Expression of Interest in working with Dorset and Wiltshire Councils to provide a larger, combined county area. It was hoped that this would unlock greater powers and resources, although the detail was as yet unknown. ○ Reported on a recent issue whereby he and Cllr Denton, as division councillors, had not been informed of a potential ‘call in’ of an application to Planning Committee. Usual practice had been that division councillors were copied in on such call ins, which were considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee, and given 2 working days to submit their comments. This had resulted in a call in for an application in Rode being missed by Cllrs Boyden and Denton, which had then gone on to be determined by the case officer. Cllr Boyden had taken this up with SC and a constitutional change had now taken place to ensure that division councillors were consulted in such instances and given 2 days to make representations to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. The Chairman stated that a formal notification of this to parish and town councils would be welcomed. ○ Cllr Murfitt reported that the Friends of Farleigh Hungerford would be meeting shortly and concerns over noise disturbance from Farleigh House continued. She further reported on works being undertaken at Farleigh Farm Shop, which she had been informed was to provide an events venue. The Chairman confirmed that the works had been reported to SC’s enforcement officer, had been logged and a notice issued. SC had instructed the landowner to submit a retrospective planning application. • Other Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Palairt Hall – No report. ○ Church Mead Committee – Cllr Hitchins reported that the Committee was busy preparing for the fireworks event and expressed thanks to those who had volunteered to assist.
9001	<p>Planning Applications, Appeals and Consultations 2023/1918/FUL - Bell Hill Garage Bell Hill Norton St Philip Bath Somerset - Demolition of existing garage buildings; erection of 9 No. dwellings; cottage extension; erection of new commercial garage building (sui generis); and associated access, landscaping and drainage works – The PC has no objection to the scheme in principle. Should the reasons for objection raised by Natural England and the Council’s Conservation/Ecology teams be resolved to their and the Council’s satisfaction the PC would be minded to support the application. Until such time the PC maintains its objection (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Lund). The full comment relating to this application is copied below:</p>

The PC is grateful to both the Planning Officer and applicant for agreeing the extension of time which enabled it to meet informally with the applicant in September and subsequently consider the amendments at its October meeting.

Incursion into the OALS

In its previous comment dated 13th December 2023 the PC noted that it *“anticipates comments from the Council’s Planning Policy and Conservation Officers and pending sight of those comments wishes to reserve its position on this matter [the incursion into the OALS]. It may wish to submit a further comment in due course.”*

There is currently no comment from the Council’s Planning Policy Officer which is disappointing. Subsequent to the PC’s original comment however, two submissions have been made by the Council’s Conservation Team (posted on 12/1/24 and 4/10/24) both of which objected to the application. The PC supports the constructive suggestions contained in them to remedy the identified concerns.

Historic England have submitted two comments (in January and August 2024). The initial comment was clear that *“...the council still need to ensure that any proposal responds to the character and appearance of the conservation area. **You should be satisfied that a scheme cannot be forthcoming that sits within the boundary of the brownfield site.**”* [emphasis added]

The second Historic England representation noted that *“the points raised in our earlier response remain extant”*.

The PC also supports the Natural England submission dated 3rd September 2024, in particular their comment on the lack of mitigation for the loss of the existing landscaping:

“The Ecological Impact Assessment (Engain, October 2023) notes that the line of trees in the centre of the site likely contributes to a green corridor through Norton St Philip linking to the wider landscape.... The line of trees likely forms a commuting feature across the site. Mitigation must therefore be provided for the loss of this feature....The proposed development must retain east to west connectivity across the site. The proposed development must therefore include a continuous replacement hedgerow or line of trees along the northern boundary of the site. To retain connectivity across the site this feature must also either extend along the western boundary of the application site following the line of the existing trees or extend further west across the wider field to join with the line of trees adjacent to The Barton.”

The PC considers that the proposed 5m landscape strip only to the northern boundary is inadequate.

If this scheme is to be permitted the PC considers that a tree belt extending 15m to the northern and 10m to the western boundaries is the minimum required to replace that lost and would be likely to satisfy Natural England’s requirements. This new, substantial planting could be secured by condition and an agreed S106.

	<p>There is precedent for this in the village. Landscaping was a crucial element of the proposals for the Fortescue Fields development (2010/0493). This was largely on a brownfield site, but the proposals required the removal of (TPOd) Tree Belts to accommodate a larger development. The developer initially suggested that as these belts consisted in the main of failing trees, they could be replaced by</p> <p>a 5m landscape strip. The Council did not accept this and considered that the development would only be acceptable with the planting of a new 15m wide Tree Belt to the eastern boundary. This landscaping was conditioned in the permission and included in the S106 to be managed by the Management Company “in perpetuity”.</p> <p>The planting of a similar “Tree Belt” along the proposed boundaries of the development with the OALS might satisfy the ecology and biodiversity concerns expressed by the Council’s Ecology Team.</p> <p>The PC is aware that Somerset Highways have lifted their holding objection to the parking provision.</p> <p>The PC has no objection to the scheme in principle. Should the reasons for objection raised by Natural England and the Council’s Conservation/Ecology teams be resolved to their and the Council’s satisfaction the PC would be minded to support the application.</p> <p>Until such time the PC maintains its objection.</p> <p>Members received and considered a planning application received after the issue of the agenda (<i>where the response time falls outside of the meeting schedule and an extension could not be obtained</i>):</p> <p>2024/1746/TCA - The Barton The Barton Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - Sycamore – Fell – Notification only - Noted.</p> <p>Planning Appeals Planning Appeals 2023/0640/FUL, 2023/0643/FUL & 2023/0644/FUL (Fortescue Fields) – to receive any updates following the reconvened PINS hearing which took place on 5th September 2024 – No update available at the current time.</p>
9002	<p>Financials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Council payments due as listed were approved (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund). b) Bank Reconciliation Statement September 2024 – the bank statements had not yet been received. c) Members considered the release of the annual grant to the Friends of St Leonards Church, which was budgeted for in the amount of £750. The Chairman reported on the application, its background and history. He reported on a previous PC agreement that there should be a two thirds proportionality

between the grants issued to Farleigh Hungerford and NSP churches. This agreement had been established in 2019 for 3 years however, the proportionality had been lost at the end of this period. It was generally acknowledged that this should have continued and, therefore, the Friends of St Leonards Church should be awarded an additional £267 to balance this out. Following debate, it was resolved to award the annual grant in the amount of £750 plus a 'back payment' of £267 totalling a grant of £1,017 (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund). The grant was issued under cheque number 02244 and paid to the Friends of Farleigh Hungerford as the organisation operating a bank account. The Chairman confirmed that a review of grant applications for 2025/26 would take place at the appropriate time.

- d) Update on the switch to Unity Trust Bank – the Clerk reported that the account was open and members had registered for online banking. There was an issue with Cllr Murfitt's registration, which the Clerk was resolving. The switch from NatWest to Unity was now underway. The PC would monitor how the administration of the account worked and revisit this should any changes be required for example, if it was felt necessary in the future to increase the authority levels of the Clerk.

N Duke	Expenses October 2024	£ 63.00
Gooding Accounts	Payroll fee August and September	£ 40.00
Devon and Somerset Pension	Pension Fund contributions Sept	£ 346.73
HMRC	PAYE/NI September 2024	£ 139.08
SALC	Membership fees 2024/5	£ 303.65

9003	<p>Litter and dog waste bin charges 2025/26</p> <p>The Clerk reported that Somerset Council had acknowledged receipt of the PC's information regarding the ownership of litter and dog waste bins in the parish. SC had confirmed there would be no charges applicable to the PC for 2025/26.</p>
9004	<p>Traffic Action Group and Highways</p> <p>Cllr Fox reported the following:</p> <p>A36 – A meeting with National Highways and other stakeholders had been arranged to provide updates on the A36 closure at Limpley Stoke, which Cllrs Fox and Hasell were due to attend. The local MP, Anna Sabine, was confirmed to be aware of the issues and might attend the meeting. Cllr Fox reported that there had been a significant increase in traffic through the High St as a result of this closure, and a closure relating to the installation of utility works at Farleigh Farm Shop. The CSW team would continue to carry out regular counts in both north and south directions and data would be prepared in readiness for the stakeholder meeting aforementioned.</p> <p>A366 – The safety report which had been prepared by TAG and adopted by the PC had been sent to Somerset Highways but received a disappointing response (previous minutes refer). A response to this had been prepared by TAG and subsequently approved for joint issue by</p>

	<p>Hemington Parish Council; Cllr Fox would sent this to the Clerk so a formal letter could be sent to SC. The letter challenged the response from Somerset Highways, which had stated there was a lack of information from the police regarding Road Traffic Accidents in the area; TAG had obtained various kinds of data from the police to support this challenge. It was agreed that the Somerset Councillors would be copied in on this correspondence. Cllr Fox further reported that the local MP, Anna Sabine, had expressed interest in attending a site visit to look at the issues along this stretch of the A366 and this would be arranged.</p> <p><i>At this point Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow Mr R Eastment to address the Council (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Hitchins).</i></p> <p>A361 – Mr Eastment reported that the AGM of the Mendip Community Speed Watch groups had recently taken place, and senior police officers had been in attendance. The Head of the Speed Enforcement Unit had provided some background on incidents on the A361 and had reported that there had been 9 deaths during the previous year. At the end of November a new AI Van was due to be deployed, the cameras were very sophisticated and would pick up on other issues besides speeding, such as use of mobiles whilst driving and drivers and passengers not using seat belts. The new van had been extensively trialled in Devon and Cornwall and, in time, would be deployed along the length of the A361. Mr Eastment reported that one of the issues with the A361 was that, as a de-restricted road, speeding could only be enforced from 69 mph; if the road had a speed limit of 40 mph enforcement could be actioned from 46 mph.</p> <p><i>At this point Standing Orders were re-instated (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund).</i></p> <p>Speed Indicator Devices – The outcome of the recent grant application to the Avon and Somerset Police was due soon. Technical information from Somerset Highways regarding the requirements for the installation of the SID had been received and Cllr Fox would ascertain whether the current poles were to the required standard. If they were not, any new poles would need to be funded by the Parish Council.</p> <p>Bollards, High St – There had been no update from Somerset Council on the request to install bollards (previous minutes refer). Cllr Denton had chased this with Somerset Highways.</p>
9005	<p>Neighbourhood Plan for Norton St Philip</p> <p>Cllr Hitchins reported that the Regulation 14 consultation was due to close on Saturday 12th October 2024 at 6.00 pm. Following the close of the consultation amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan would be considered; it was noted that, in order to progress the Plan as expediently as possible, an extraordinary meeting of the PC might be required to approve any such amendments.</p>
9006	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None.</p>

9007	<p>Parish News</p> <p>The following items were agreed for inclusion in the next edition of Parish New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General meeting update• Planning application information <p>Cllr Murfitt reported that she had contacted the editors of the Parish News to request that Farleigh Hungerford be included on the strapline of the magazine, as per the other hamlets in the parish (September minutes refer). She had not received a response.</p>
9008	<p>Meeting schedule</p> <p>Wednesday 13th November 2024 – Palairet Hall, Norton St Philip</p>

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.46 pm.