

# NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

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

**Chair** Ian Hasell, 7 Monmouth Paddock, Norton St Philip, Somerset, BA2 7LA, [ianhasell1@gmail.com](mailto:ianhasell1@gmail.com)

**Clerk** Nicola Duke, April Rise, 81 Studland Park, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3HN,  
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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00 pm** in the Palairet Hall, Norton St Philip

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

**In attendance:** Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk) and 6 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 in respect of the planning application relating to the Bell Hill garage (comments previously circulated) outlining his areas of concern. The comments were noted.
- A resident spoke to the Council in respect of a bid which had been put together for s106 monies held by Somerset Council; the resident outlined the background and history to the s106 funds, the work she had carried out to prepare a project bid for footpath works and sought the Council's assistance, as the Qualifying Body, in making a bid for the funds.
- A resident spoke to the Council in respect of the planning application relating to Bell Hill garage, reporting that he had identified information which appeared to show parts of the site lay within the curtilage of the listed Manor Farm building. The comment was noted.

	AGENDA ITEM
9065	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Cllr Hitchins and Cllr Lund, due to prior commitments - accepted.
9066	<b>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate</b> None.
9067	<b>Minutes</b> a) The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on <b>12<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b> were approved for accuracy with two minor amendments and adopted (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Fox).

	<p>a. To consider any matters arising from the above meetings (if any): None.</p>
9068	<p><b>Council Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairman – No report.</li> <li>• Parish Clerk – No report.</li> <li>• County Councillors; Dawn Denton had circulated a report and sent apologies for absence. Adam Boyden sent apologies for absence after the meeting.</li> <li>• Other Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Palairet Hall – No report.</li> <li>○ Church Mead Committee – Cllr Hitchins had sent a report, which would be circulated to members.</li> <li>○ Sustainable Norton St Philip – No report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
9069	<p><b>Planning Applications, Matters and Appeals</b>  <b>2023/1918/FUL</b> – Bell Hill Garage, Bell Hill, Norton St Philip, Bath, Somerset – Demolition of existing garage buildings; erection of 9no dwellings, cottage extension; erection of new commercial garage building (sui generis); and associated access, landscaping and drainage works) additional information received 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 – Reconsult. Members noted comments made by residents during the public participation session and agreed to further research the issue raised relating to the curtilage of Manor Farm and the associated listed building designation. Following debate, it was resolved that the amendments to the scheme were welcomed and the Conservation Team’s comments supported. In the absence of an HRA/AA and NE response the PC considered that a fully informed comment could not currently be submitted. Thus it wished to restate its support in principle for the scheme; full support being subject to NE withdrawing their objection and the provision of a more substantial tree belt. This, together with the removal of Permitted Development rights and a satisfactory CEMP and Noise Report could be addressed by condition (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox). The detail to the PC’s comment was agreed as below listed:</p> <p>The PC appreciates the opportunity to comment further on this application.</p> <p>In October 2024 the PC resolved to support the scheme in principle. In its comment at that time the PC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted the Historic England (HE) position that SC <i>“should be satisfied that a scheme cannot be forthcoming that sits within the boundary of the brownfield site”</i></li> <li>• Noted the Natural England (NE) position that <i>“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</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>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.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered that <i>“the proposed 5m landscape strip only to the northern boundary is inadequate”</i> and that a 10m strip would be the minimum.</li> </ul> <p>The PC’s comment concluded: <i>“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.”</i></p> <p>Since then there have been changes to the design which have enabled the Council’s Conservation and Ecology teams to lift their previous objections. The PC recognises that these changes are improvements to the scheme.</p> <p>The PC notes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Historic England have reiterated their previously described concerns.</li> <li>2. Natural England have requested sight of the HRA prior to commenting further.</li> <li>3. The proposed “landscape strip” remains as 5m deep and only to the northern boundary.</li> <li>4. There is no comment from the Council’s Planning Policy team.</li> </ol> <p>In relation to the above bullet points the PC wishes to make the following comments:</p> <p>1). The NSP Neighbourhood Plan is now at Examination and the PC suggests should be given weight. The brownfield part of the Bell Hill Garage site is allocated for development under Policy 4. In its response to the NP Regulation 14 consultation, HE raised concerns about the quantum of housing allowed for in the Policy. As a result of these concerns the policy was amended to allow for <i>“up to 12 dwellings”</i>. Supporting text was added which further addressed the need to protect the Conservation Area and other heritage assets:</p> <p><i>“Development of this site has the potential to enhance the conservation Area. Any development proposal will be expected to comply with the adopted Local Plan Policies DP3 (Heritage Conservation) and DP 7.1”</i> The PC continues to consider that the incursion by gardens into the protected OALS and outside of the site allocation boundary in the NP is regrettable. It notes the Council’s Conservation Officer’s comment of 12th Feb 2025 that <i>“as a result of the proposed materials and the encroachment into the Old Orchard”</i> there is <i>“less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area”</i>. Despite this the Conservation Officer finds that <i>“the public benefits of the scheme do now outweigh the identified less than substantial harm, and the previous conservation objection is overcome.”</i></p> <p>The changes introduced in the 2024 NPPF including the introduction of the need for “strong” rather than “clear” reasons for refusing development in protected areas are relevant. The PC recognises that the harm resulting from both the incursion into the OALS and the use of reconstituted stone to elevations not facing Bell Hill is outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.</p>
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	<p>2) and 3). As a consequence of the site being proposed for allocation, NE suggested that an HRA be carried out. A shadow HRA leading to Appropriate Assessment was carried out in April 2024. This concluded that likely significant effects were possible on the Mells Valley SAC and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. The Site Improvement Plans for both the Mells Valley and Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC are referenced in the Appropriate Assessment which acknowledges that the Bell Hill Garage site <i>“appears to include suitable habitats, such as vegetated boundaries to support SAC bat species. These could be impacted through physical removal, or introduction of artificial lighting as a result of residential development on this site resulting in disturbance of foraging and commuting bats and thus affecting the targets in the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives and the specific objectives regarding maintaining or restoring ‘The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species’ and ‘the populations of qualifying species’.</i> The Appropriate Assessment considered however that the LPP1 Policies in place (in particular DP6: Bat Protection) together with the former MDC’s “Mells Valley SAC, North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC) Guidance for Development (2019)” provided the means to enable compliance with the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>In December 2024 the Council’s Ecology Team lifted their previous objection subject to the findings of their HRA and conditions concerning the proposed landscape strip. They stated that this work would be carried out in early 2025 “as a priority”. As noted by NE this is not yet forthcoming. Nonetheless NE requires the HRA to demonstrate that the scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains commuting corridors across the development</li> <li>• Maintains no net loss of foraging habitat for SAC bats</li> <li>• Avoids light spill onto retained and newly created habitat suitable for SAC bats</li> </ul> <p>NE have requested that they are reconsulted once the HRA has been completed. Without sight of the HRA or any resultant NE comment the PC remains concerned at the loss of the existing vegetation and what it considers to be its inadequate replacement with a 5m “landscape strip” as currently proposed.</p> <p>As previously described, the PC considers that the minimum provision should be a 10m wide tree belt around both the northern and western boundaries of the development with Great Orchard. In the PC’s view this would provide adequate screening as well as replacement for the vegetation proposed for removal. It might also satisfy the concerns expressed by NE. The HRA carried out for the NP was on the basis of the allocation not extending into the OALS; the encroachment and resultant loss of potential habitat (albeit with a landscape strip proposed) makes a significant difference.</p> <p>4). As the PC stated in its initial comment: <i>“The PC considers this is a finely balanced application. The principle of development is accepted...There are both harms and benefits.”</i> The PC has considered at length the proposed incursion into the OALS by</p>
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	<p>the creation of domestic gardens and would find it helpful to have guidance from the Council's Planning Policy Team.</p> <p><b>2025/0285/HSE</b> -Hillside Cottage Farm Church Farm Lane Farleigh Hungerford Frome Somerset - Erection of first floor rear extension and re-model of ground floor – Support (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Curwen):</p> <p>This application relates to the proposed erection of first floor rear extension and re-modelling of the ground floor. This is not a listed property and is not in a conservation area.</p> <p>The applicant informs that the property was originally used as a grain store, before it was converted in the early 20c to provide accommodation. The walls are Bath stone and inside the cottage currently has a kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor, with 2 bedrooms upstairs. There is a lean-to extension at the rear which was originally constructed as a cart store, which now serves as a reception room. The current extension has very shallow footings; the walls are built of rough local stone, with cement lintels over the window frames, and these are currently perished allowing rainwater to penetrate inside. Along the flank wall of both the main cottage and lean-to a narrow extension has been constructed more recently, and this is faced with natural lapped timber cladding.</p> <p>The applicant would like to replace the rear lean-to extension with a 2-storey timber framed extension, to be constructed on suitable foundations and clad with natural lapped timber to match that used along the flank wall. Windows will be pvc copies of the timber window frames which have perished. The roof of both the main cottage and the rear lean-to is covered in clay tiles which are to be retained and re-used.</p> <p>The applicant states that the cost of re-using the existing rough stone in the new extension (and of providing adequate footings to bear the weight of a 2-storey stone structure) would be prohibitively expensive.</p> <p>The plan to extend and remodel the interior will provide a reception room, a kitchen with open plan living area, a study and a utility room on the ground floor, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the first floor. As such, it will provide a greatly improved living space on the same footprint.</p> <p>This is a modest extension using sympathetic materials; neighbours are supportive of the plans. The Parish Council therefore <b>supports</b> the application.</p> <p>Members considered planning applications received after the issue of the agenda <i>(where the response time fell outside of the meeting schedule and an extension could not be obtained)</i></p> <p><b>2025/0379/TCA</b> - Norton House Bath Road Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - T1 - Walnut – Fell – Notification only – Members expressed concern at the removal of such</p>
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	<p>a large, prominent and visible tree and resolved to object to the proposals (proposed Cllr Fox, seconded Cllr Murfitt).</p> <p><b>2025/0432/TCA</b> - Hurley House Wells Road Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - Hazel (T1) - Fell. Fruit trees x 2 (G1) – Fell – Notification only – Members expressed concern at the absence of planned re-planting to mitigate the loss of the trees and resolved to submit a comment to the Tree Officer to ask that such reinstatement is made a condition of any permission granted (proposed Cllr Fox, seconded Cllr Murfitt).</p> <p><b>Planning Matters</b></p> <p>Members received an update on a report made to Wiltshire Council relating to light pollution Pomeroy Lane, Wingfield– the Clerk reported that Wiltshire Council had been informed of the issue and the supporting photographic evidence from residents was awaited. Cllrs Curwen and Murfitt would arrange for this to be sent to the Clerk.</p> <p><b>Planning Appeal Decisions</b></p> <p><b>APP/E/3335/X/23/3333867</b> – Pennys Peace Cottage, Mackley Lane, Norton St Philip, BA2 7NL – 2023/1212/CLE – Application for a certificate of lawful use or development – Appeal allowed (information previously circulated) - Noted.</p>																								
9070	<p><b>Financials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Council payments due as listed were approved (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox).</li><li>b) The Bank Reconciliation Statement February 2025 would follow on receipt of bank statement.</li><li>c) The predicted out turn budget and Financial Position Statement March 2025 would follow on receipt of bank statement.</li><li>d) The Clerk reported that NatWest had rejected the bank switch application to Unity Bank. This would now be resubmitted once the current financial year had closed.</li></ul>																								
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9071	<p><b>Parish Council Accounts year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</b> (information previously circulated)</p> <p>Members addressed administrative tasks relating to the preparation and submission of the accounts year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Members reviewed the Fixed Asset Register, which was adopted with amendments to incorporate comments from members – adopted (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox).</li><li>b) Review of Council Reserves – approved (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Murfitt).</li><li>c) Appointment of payroll provider for financial year 2025-26 – it was resolved to renew the contract with Gooding Accounts at a cost of £20 inc vat per calendar month (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox). It was noted that another local payroll company had just been appointed by one of the Clerk’s other parish councils and the Clerk would update members as to the performance of the contract to enable the current arrangements to be kept under review.</li><li>d) Members considered the draft NSP Publication Scheme, which was duly adopted (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Murfitt).</li><li>e) Members considered the draft NSP Investment Policy, which was duly adopted (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Murfitt).</li></ul>			
9072	<p><b>Traffic Action Group, Highways and Footpaths</b></p> <p>Cllr Fox provided an update on the work of the Traffic Action Group, reporting the following:</p> <p><b>A366 Report</b></p> <p>Members of TAG had met Anna Sabine in February to present our concerns. She agreed that action was necessary and offered to contact Nick Cowling at SC on our behalf. Cllr Fox would chase for an update.</p> <p><b>Pedestrian Safety survey</b></p> <p>The survey forms had now all been distributed in NSP, FH and Faulkland and in the Parish News. TAG meeting in May will discuss and assess the collated results.</p> <p><b>CSW reports</b></p> <p>The NSP report was discussed. There had been difficulties experienced in using the complex police website to report drivers without MOTs, tax or insurance. Mr Eastment had undertaken to suggest to his contacts at Avon and Somerset Police that</p>			

	<p>the website is simplified. There was no Farleigh Hungerford report as it was currently unsafe to conduct CSW sessions near the building works at Hungerford Arms.</p> <p><b>SIDs</b></p> <p>The two new solar powered SIDs had been installed on private land on Church Street and are operational. Several residents had remarked on their success at slowing the traffic. Two volunteers had offered to manage the SIDs.</p> <p><b>Pavement bollards at the Old Shop</b></p> <p>Somerset Highways had not been able to offer funding or assistance with either installation or maintenance. The PC had no expertise in this work so it was suggested that the PC Clerk should be asked if Wiltshire County Council could give guidance and recommendations for contractors, since she had connections there. The Clerk would take this forward and liaise with Cllr Fox.</p>
9073	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan for Norton St Philip</b></p> <p>Following the conclusion of the Regulation 16 consultation and publication of the responses received members considered what additional information, if any, to send to the Examiner. The draft responses to the Regulation 16 consultation comments and the Examiner's Initial Comments had been circulated and were considered. It was resolved to adopt the documents and approve them for submission (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox).</p>
9074	<p><b>Mendip Local Plan Part II - Limited Update - Hearing sessions</b></p> <p>The Chairman reported on the hearing sessions scheduled for 11-14 March 2025, informing members of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PC had sent a report to the Inspector regarding the allocations for the 505, which contained challenges relating to the way in which sites had been assessed.</li> <li>• Somerset Council had confirmed at the hearing that it would use a new process for carrying out the assessments required for the new Local Plan.</li> <li>• The Inspector had taken on board the comments made by the PC, which Cllr Hasell had spoken to, and had arranged appropriate site visits. A visit was expected to NSP on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>• The hearings had progressed at a good pace, and the day allocated on the Wednesday had not, in fact, been required.</li> </ul>
9075	<p><b>Developer monies S106/Unilateral Undertaking, Longmead Close</b></p> <p>Members considered the next steps for identifying projects suitable for the s106 monies held by Somerset Council. Following debate, it was agreed to prepare information for residents, citing the bid which had been prepared by Mrs Oliver, and</p>

	requesting suggestions for suitable projects. The Annual Parish Meeting in May would contain an agenda item to 'launch' the consultation and material would be prepared for residents inviting suggestions to be sent to the Parish Clerk.
9076	<b>Correspondence</b> None at time of issue.
9077	<b>Parish News</b> Members agreed the following items for inclusion in the next edition of Parish News: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on the s106 item</li> <li>• Update on bus timetables</li> <li>• General meeting report</li> </ul>
9078	<b>Meeting schedule</b> Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2025 – Old School Room, Farleigh Hungerford

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.20 pm.