NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on
Wednesday 14th October 2026 at **7.00 pm** in the Old School Room, Farleigh Hungerford.

Present: Cllr Murfitt (Chair), Cllr Curwen, Cllr Molian, Cllr Lund, Cllr Hitchins and Cllr Brooks.
In attendance: Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk) and 3 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 regarding the review of the Somerset Heritage at Risk Register, requesting that the historic stone-flagged pavements and raised causeways be considered for inclusion. The resident highlighted their age, use of local Jurassic limestone, historic significance and contribution to the village streetscape, noting that their condition was deteriorating due to uneven surfaces and inappropriate repairs. The Parish Council was asked to investigate the matter further and work with the relevant authorities to support their preservation. The Chair confirmed that, in order to be eligible for inclusion in the Heritage at Risk register, the asset needed to have a listed status within the planning framework. The PC and the resident would work together to explore the options further.
- A resident thanked the Parish Council for its comments regarding the recent Bath Rugby planning applications and welcomed the recent decision notice. An update was provided on the proposed use of the automatic Speed watch HGV camera. The Police had confirmed in writing that, although they could not formally approve or support its use as it fell outside their jurisdiction, they had no objection to its use. The resident confirmed that the Police had given consent for their written response to be forwarded to Somerset Council.

	AGENDA ITEM
9286	**Apologies for Absence** Cllr Fox due to a prior commitment, accepted.
9287	**Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate** None.

9288	**Minutes** **a)** The minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on **9th September 2026** were approved for accuracy and adopted (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Brooks). **b)** To consider any matters arising from the above meetings (if any): None.
9289	**Council Reports** • The Chair reported on the following items and a copy of the full report is appended to the minutes: o Bath Rugby's application for a Certificate of Lawful Use o Wessex Water Emergency Contact List o Cotswold Homes proposals Frome Road site o Farleigh Hungerford defibrillator o Public Emergency Briefing Screenings o Farleigh Hungerford rights of way land ownership • The Vice-Chair reported on the following items and a copy of the full report is appended to the minutes: o Proposed boules court Church Mead o Recent SCRAPP meeting – in the light of the changes to both the NPPF and the Scheme of Delegation and the likelihood of further volume planning proposals in the near future it was agreed to issue an information notice to the parish. • Parish Clerk: o Reported on the need for an additional member to be appointed to the Staffing Committee. It was resolved to appoint Cllr Brooks (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Molian). • County Councillors; Dawn Denton and Adam Boyden had provided reports which had been circulated to members. Both councillors had sent apologies for absence. • Other Reports: <u>Palairet Hall</u> Cllr Molian had circulated a report, which is copied below: **1. Refurbishment** A new set of automatic doors has been fitted, tested and are now operational at the Palairet Hall. The entry code and related information have been sent to all users. The Committee has used this as an opportunity to review the decorative state of the entrance hall, as well

as some small amount of making good related to the installation of the doors. Estimates have been requested. Some of the chairs are showing their age and a local specialist will be asked to quote for reconditioning.

2. Finance

The bank accounts show a combined balance of just over £25k. Monthly receipts for July and August were £896 and £1067 respectively. The Committee has implemented price increases for the hire of the Hall of between 10% and 20%, depending on the length of the hire period. For new and occasional users these have come into immediate effect; for regular users the introduction is staggered over the next few months. In prior consultation users agreed that these rises were fair and reasonable.

The arrangement regarding VAT reclamation and invoicing between the PHC and NSPPC was raised and matches the understanding of the Palairet Hall Management Committee.

The short term liability for the installation of the doors and related decoration is estimated to be around £13k.

3. Usage

The rate of usage remains steady. There is some unused capacity which will be promoted to local clubs and associations.

<u>Church Mead Committee</u>

Cllr Hitchins had circulated a report, which is copied below:

1. Electrical upgrade

In August CMC contracted Holborn Electrical Ltd to replace the lighting in the Pavilion and containers and certify the electrical installations as safe and up to spec. Their quote was approx. £1300+VAT. The work has been completed and makes a great difference to both Pavilion and containers. Mathew Holborn has written to the committee as follows:

"There will be £0 charge for the recent works completed at NSP cricket pavilion. A charitable gift from M Holborn Electrical to NSP cricket club.

The electrical inspection has unfortunately failed with the operation of RCD device, We have this part on order (hoping it will fit due to age) and will get this fitted in a timely manner.

We hope this will go some way to supporting the local club, church mead and especially the spectacular bonfire night we all look forward to annually."

2. Grass

Complete Weed Control attended on 28th September and sprayed the field, but not the playground. They were on site from 09.00-09.30; members of the CMC remained until the grass dried.

The weeds are showing signs of dying back; however there is little evidence of the grass emerging on the remaining brown areas. Initially the ground is being aerated. If this doesn't work a substantial area of reseeding will need to be done in the spring.

3. Mower

The new gang mower is in the container and will hopefully make mowing a lot easier next year.

4. Fireworks

Preparations for the event scheduled for November 7th are proceeding. The numbers of volunteers remains a concern.

5. Proposed June 2027 re-enactment on CM

The Committee has again been approached to facilitate this but has informed the organiser that it remains unsupportive.

Sustainable Norton St Philip

Cllr Lund had circulated a report, which is copied below:

1. **People's Emergency Briefing**

A very successful screening of the 50-minute documentary took place in NSP church on 9th October 2026. About 70 people attended and, having watched the film, they engaged in facilitated conversation with their neighbours in the room and had the opportunity to comment on their response to the film via the roving mike. Audience members were also asked to:

- Sign the national petition calling on the government to host a televised national emergency briefing on the climate crisis;
- Email or fill in a postcard to ask their MP to support a televised national emergency briefing - ones for Anna Sabine were collected and will be delivered to her constituency address in Frome;
- Consider whether they could host a screening in their workplace or with a social group.

Many thanks are due to the following for making it such a successful evening:

- To the Church for free use of the church building;
- To Val Fox and Kevin Byrne for being on the door;

	• To Jackie Moss and Jane Standen for sorting refreshments and tickets; • To Hazel King for publicising the event on the website and social media; • To Martin Moss and Tony Day for managing tech – BIG CLAPS! • To Barbara and Tony Day for printing the leaflets - and to everyone who delivered them; • To Alice and Ben Tollworthy for the use of their field for parking and to Neil Pollard for facilitating parking; • To everyone who came and was prepared to engage. **2. Repair Café** The next Repair Café will take place from 10:00 – 12:00 on Saturday 24th October in the Palairet Hall. Residents are invited to bring along items that need mending and have a cup of tea/ coffee and a slice of cake. The Repair Café is run by volunteers and is supported solely by donations.
9290	**Planning Applications, Enforcements and Consultations** **2026/1654/FUL** - Bath Rugby Club Farleigh House Church Farm Lane Farleigh Hungerford - Temporary erection of a training marquee for a period of five years – Members noted the Holding Objection which had been lodged in September 2026 and resolved to approve this as a formal objection, with amendments to include references to the Decision Notice for application **2026/0421/CLE** as appropriate (proposed Cllr Hitchins, seconded Cllr Lund). The Chair would draft the revised document and circulate for comment prior to issue. **2026/1745/TCA** - Norton House Bath Road Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - T1 - Beech Tree - Removal of split limb – Notification Only - Noted. **2026/1575/HSE and 2026/1576/LBC**- Bell Cottage Ringwell Lane Norton St Philip Bath Somerset - Installation of 14 solar PV panels – Support (proposed Cllr Brooks, seconded Cllr Murfitt): The heritage statement provided by the applicant proposes that the low-profile, black framed solar PV array will achieve an appropriate balance between heritage conservation and sustainable living. It:

	● Preserves Historic Fabric: Fully reversible, non-invasive mounting method protects original roof components. ● Minimizes Visual Impact: All-black, low-profile design integrated thoughtfully into the roof plane. ● Supported by Precedent: Follows the established context set by neighbouring properties on Ringwell Lane, notably Pool Cottage. ● Delivers Public Benefit: Reduces carbon emissions and lowers energy costs, helping to ensure the long-term viable use and maintenance of the listed building." The PV array to the west side of the roof will not be visible to the public footway of Ringwell. Those on the east side of the roof will be barely visible over a high fence and a tall hedge line. The Parish Council agrees that it is well beyond the time to embrace solar energy where planning permits, and this application should be applauded for its sensitivity. The PC supports this application. **2026/1905/HSE** - 1 Church Street Norton St Philip Frome Somerset BA2 7LU - Demolition of existing single-storey rear extension & erection of single-storey side/rear extension with flat roof and rooflights, internal alterations, extended rear terrace with retaining walls and planters, & associated landscaping – Support with conditions (proposed Cllr Hitchins , seconded Cllr Brooks). This application is to demolish a lean to single story lean to extension which appears to be a fairly recent addition to the house. This addition has a steeply pitched roof which almost reaches the eaves of the original house. This roof appears to be in poor condition. In 2016 an application to demolish this extension and replace it with a single storey, flat roofed extension was approved (2016/0134). The current application seeks to retain a section of the pitched roof adjacent to the neighbouring dwelling whilst demolishing the remainder and replacing it with a single story, flat roofed extension. This will be set back from the boundaries of both the highway and the neighbouring house. It thus extends further towards the eastern boundary than the previous, permitted, scheme but does not extend as far to the west. It extends no further into the garden than the previous, permitted, scheme. The house is currently owned by a family with young children who require more living space. The PC is grateful to them for facilitating a site visit on 12th October, attended by three Parish Councillors. Constraints.

	The house is not listed. It is however situated within the NSP Conservation Area, at the point where Bell Hill turns a corner and becomes Church Street, the original core of the village. The house and its stone garden wall along the highway form part of the character and appearance of the area. PC Comment This application is a variation of the scheme permitted in 2016. Although it extends further towards the eastern boundary with the highway, it is set back both from that boundary and that of the neighbouring property to the west. It is also not as elevated as that of the previous scheme; this allows for a new window to the first floor hallway of the main dwelling. The scheme allows for the retention of a large garden. The PC notes that the Conservation Officer has not to date been consulted and suggests that this would be appropriate. Should the LPA be minded to approve the application, the PC suggests that conditions relating to approval of materials would be appropriate. These were imposed for the previous scheme. The PC further suggests that a planting scheme along the eastern boundary would mitigate the harm to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. This was discussed with the applicant at the site visit. Subject to the above, the PC supports the application. Members considered any planning applications received after the issue of the agenda *(where the response time fell outside of the meeting schedule and an extension cannot be obtained)* **2026/0610/VRC** - Orchard Cottage Mackley Lane Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - Removal of conditions 5 (Holiday Purposes) and 6 (31 day occupation) relating to planning permission 109395/002 (deadline for comment 29th October 2026) – Comment (proposed Cllr Hitchins, seconded Cllr Murfitt): This application essentially appears to be a re-submission of 2018/2812. That application followed a Breach of Condition Notice served on the owners on 28th August 2018. The application was refused by the LPA on 9th January 2019 and the subsequent Appeal dismissed in November 2019 (APP/Q3305/W/19/3232796). The Inspector concluded: *"...the location of the appeal site is removed from the primary* *village. Due to this location, the development boundary and the provisions of* *the LP provide a plan-led justification to restrict development. It is this location*

	which justified the use of the restrictive conditions and for the reasons identified above, I am satisfied that the location continues to justify such a restriction. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the conditions continue to fulfil a useful planning function." Planning application 2018/2812 was submitted with a 'Certificate B' landowner notification certificate stating that the land to which the application related was in the ownership of Audrey May Applegate and Hazel Kennard. The current planning application has been submitted with a 'Certificate A' stating that the land to which the application relates is in the sole ownership of the applicant, named at Section 1 as "Mr Studt". Mr Studt is referenced at Section 8 of the Summary of the Design and Access Statement : *"The current occupier of the dwelling (Mr Joe Studt) has vulnerabilities via ADHD and ASD diagnoses. The combination of insecurity of his tenancy; the prospect of having to move elsewhere would only exacerbate his symptoms. At Orchard Cottage, he has found a peaceful environment and location where he can manage his symptoms."* If Mr Studt is now the sole owner, the current application is disingenuous in suggesting that the application is due to both the above and: *"a lack of demand for holiday lets in this location for various reasons – re-emergence of cheap foreign holiday alternatives after COVID; saturation of market due to Airbnb in recent years; higher operating costs and increased regulation."* Assuming Mr Studt is the owner, he is applying to lift the restrictions on a house which he bought presumably in the full knowledge that the restrictions as to its use and occupancy existed. The PC further notes that the letter from Richard Candy at Letting-R-Us included in the D&A is identical to that used in 2018. Both letters are undated. The PC suggests that this letter can carry no weight.

	The PC suggests that the 2018 Appeal Decision still a material consideration despite the lack of 5yr Housing Land Supply. It further suggests that should the LPA be minded to allow this technical application, conditions are imposed removing permitted development rights in terms of extensions and alterations in order to preserve the character of the area and the amenity of neighbours. The PC requests that the LPA consider the matters referenced in this comment when determining this application. It recognises that determination is essentially a matter of planning judgment and thus raises no objection. **Planning Decision** **2026/0421/CLE –** Farleigh House, Church Farm Lane, Farleigh Hungerford, Frome, Somerset, BA2 7RW **-** The modified certificate of lawful use specifies that the buildings and associated land for the holding of corporate events and private functions, including private parties and weddings, together with the erection and use of temporary marquees in connection with such events is **not** lawful under existing planning permission – Members received and noted this Notification of Decision (circulated), and had regard to the comments made in the Chair's report.
9291	**Financials** (reports previously circulated) a) Council payments due as listed below were approved (proposed Cllr Hitchins, seconded Cllr Brooks). b) Members received the Bank Reconciliation Statements September 2026. c) Members received and noted the list of Council Reserves and Budget Report. d) Members received and noted the External Audit report 2025-2026 and noted the Clerk's comments thereon. It was resolved to amend the Asset Register to list Church Mead as land held as a custodian trustee with a value of £Nil (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Molian). e) The Clerk reported on the agreed transfer of funds to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and it was resolved that the deposit would be made following the payments due for October at a level which would match the Council's list of Earmarked Reserves. This would be signed off by the Chair and Vice-Chair prior to the transfer being made (proposed Cllr Murfitt , seconded Cllr Molian). f) Members approved the addition of Cllr D Brooks as a Bank Signatory (proposed Cllr Lund, seconded Cllr Molian). g) Members considered an IT upgrade to 'Flo Verified Mail' (information previously circulated) and Cllr Brooks reported that the service would ensure email service

reached the intended recipient as well as protecting the Council from 'spoofing. He further reported that the UK Cabinet Office and National Cyber Security Centre recommended such a system and the PC would therefore be following 'best practice' if it chose to proceed. The associated costs were in the region of £14- 16 pcm per domain with a £289 set up fee. Cllr Brooks would bring a costed proposal and recommendation to the November PC meeting. Cllr Brooks was appointed as the Lead Member for IT matters (proposed Cllr Murfitt, seconded Cllr Hitchins).

h) Members discussed the payment of the invoice for the installation of accessible doors at the Palairet Hall in the amount of £10,275 plus vat. The Clerk reported on specialist VAT advice which had been sought and received and, following debate, it was resolved that the Parish Council would meet the bill in full from the reserves held for the Palairet Hall, with no contribution required from the Palairet Hall Management Committee. In order to balance the £1,150 difference between the costs of the work and the funds held the grant to the Palairet Hall would be appropriately adjusted for 2027-2028 (proposed Cllr Molian, seconded Cllr Lund). Members also received a report from the Clerk on specialist VAT advice received in the matter of the purchase of the parish mower, to which the Church Mead Committee had donated funds. Members noted that this presented an issue in terms of reclaiming the VAT on the bill for the parish mower and it was agreed to consider returning the funds donated and making an adjustment to the grant to Church Mead Committee for 2027-2028. This would be listed as a formal agenda item for the November PC meeting.

N Duke	Expenses October 2026	£ 51.21
N Duke	Salary September 2026	£ 1,331.55
Gooding Accounts	Payroll fee September	£ 20.00
Devon and Somerset Pension	Pension Fund September 2026	£ 382.98
HMRC	PAYE/NI September 2026	£ 370.47
ML Cleaning Solutions	CMC Dog bins	£ 350.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit fee 2025-2026	£ 378.00
Cllr Hitchins	Reimburse Land Registry fees	£ 14.00
St Philip and St James Church	Annual grant	£ 1,200.00
Palairet Hall	TAG hall hire	£ 20.00

9292 **Neighbourhood Plan**

It was noted that the Clerk had written to Somerset Council in September 2026 requesting an update, which had not been received to date.

9293 **Somerset Council Local Plan**

No updates or reports.

9294	**Traffic Action Group, Highways and Footpaths** Members received any available updates and reports as listed. Cllr Fox had provided a report from the Traffic Action Group (TAG), which is copied below: • TAG last met on 15 September. • **SID update** Since 7 September I have been awaiting a response to our submission to Somerset Council Highways Team for their Memorandum of Understanding. This will enable the PC to proceed with the purchase of two new SIDs, one for Bath Rd and the other for Farleigh Road. I have pursued Sara Davis twice for a response. • A reasonable price of £4259.98 has been quoted for two devices by Elan City but this is subject to a prompt order. • The two existing SIDs near the school were returned to full warning-and-data mode at the beginning of September. • **White line repainting** We are still awaiting news from Highways Team for the white lines which were promised at the bend on Church Street and along the "painted pavement" at Town Barton. Reminders were sent to Sara Davis on 8 September. • **A366 50mph speed limit** The PC has received a Notice from SC Traffic Management for the proposed new speed limit. We await details. • **Fleur de Lys bollards** We are awaiting quotations for the installation of six bollards at the Fleur de Lys bus stop. One quotation has so far been received. The Clerk is processing. • **High pavements** It was agreed that our historic high pavements on Church Street and North Street should be considered for inclusion in the Heritage At Risk Register being compiled by Somerset Council. • **Noise and air pollution in NSP** It was agreed to approach the PC for support to request a measurement of this from Somerset Council. This item is being dealt with elsewhere on the PC agenda. In addition, Members considered the following: a) Consideration of the purchase of a new Speed Indicator Device for Bath Road (previous minutes refer) – It was agreed to defer this item to the November PC meeting and to include consideration of the proposals to refurbish the Westcotech unit for use in Farleigh Hungerford. b) Update on the progress for the footpath route inside Castle Wall in Farleigh Hungerford – The Clerk reported that the specialist appointed by the PC was still awaiting a response from SC Highways as to what would be required. c) Members considered how best to engage with SC re: atmospheric/noise pollution in the parish (draft correspondence from TAG previously circulated). Following debate, it was agreed that the draft letter would be amended to pose the questions

	in the first instance, with a request for a site meeting to follow if deemed appropriate and necessary. Members also noted that works to the high pavement on Church St in NSP were included in the list of proposed highway works circulated by the SC. This was felt to be the result of the Traffic Action Group's site meeting with the highways department in the spring. Cllr Fox would ascertain the exact details for the proposed works at the forthcoming Local Council Network meeting, especially in respect of the proposed surfacing.
9295	**Correspondence** (previously circulated) a) Somerset Council re: Review and Amendment of Draft Somerset Heritage at Risk Register for Your Area - No action required. b) Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service re: Five Year Plan consultation - It was agreed that this would be circulated to residents and made available on the Council website.
9296	**Parish News** The below items were agreed for inclusion in the next edition of Parish News: • Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service consultation • General meeting update • SC Domestic Abuse Strategy as included in Cllr Boyden's report.
9297	**Meeting schedule** Wednesday 11th November 2026 – The Palairet Hall, Norton St Philip.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.00 pm.

APPENDICES

Chair's report to NSPPC meeting on Weds 14.10.26

Bath Rugby Application for Certificate of Lawful Use

Ed Winter the case officer at SCC on Application 2026/0421/CLE has issued a detailed 23-page Report on the Application by Bath Rugby for a certificate of Lawful Use.

On 8.10.26 BBC News published their report on this decision under the headline "*Weddings Kicked into touch at Bath Rugby H.Q.*"

The Residents of Farleigh-Hungerford have expressed their gratitude for the support they received both from the PC and from our country councillors in successfully objecting to Bath Rugby's application.

When the PC looks at item 9290 on the agenda tonight, we may need to consider whether this decision requires the PC to add to or modify its current 'holding response' to BR's other application for the temporary erection of a training marquee for a period of five years. (2026/1654/FUL)

In Summary, back in 2010 the site obtained permission for Sui Generis mixed use as HQ & Training facilities for Bath Rugby Club. This permission is capable of including a range of club-related corporate, commercial, sporting, sponsor, partner, staff, member and community functions.

However, SCC has determined that this permission does NOT authorise the use of the site as a general or wedding events venue. Specifically, SCC has rejected that weddings or materially similar open-market private celebrations can be regarded as 'ancillary or ordinarily incidental to' the HQ & Training use, as BR contended. SCC also rejected the argument that BR had demonstrated that such use had continued for a 10 year period which might have made them immune from enforcement.

Accordingly, a certificate of lawful use has been granted in modified form which clarifies that use of the buildings and surrounding land is permitted '*as the HQ & training facility of BR, together with sponsor, partner, stakeholder, hospitality, meetings and other club-related functions directly connected with the operation of Bath Rugby Club, including internal Club functions, and ancillary temporary marquees. Weddings, wedding-receptions and wedding celebrations would be expressly excluded from the modified description of lawful development'.*

The decision lists activities considered to fall <u>outside permitted use</u> as

- Private functions not demonstrably connected to the club's HQ function
- Private parties, particularly where held for 3rd parties with no functional connection to the Club
- Weddings, wedding receptions and related celebrations
- Use of the site as a commercial events venue through open-market venue-hire; and
- Temporary Marquees where associated with those activities

It is also expressly noted that a planning application would be required in order to assess the planning merits of any future application to hold weddings on the site, and this would consider the policy and material implications relevant at that time.

<u>Wessex Water's Emergency Contact List</u>

On 1.10.26 an email was received from Fraser-Hickson the Environment planning officer for water quality at Wessex Water's Integrated Environment Planning Dept. He had been referred by SCC to me as Chair of the PC to find out who the Environment Agency's emergency contact list should include for the Farleigh Hungerford Bathing Water. Apparently, SCC maintain that the bathing water is not their responsibility. I responded by sending him contact details for Philip Bryant of Stowford Farm (the landowner of the land on which the bathing club is situated) as well as referring him to the website of the Farleigh & District bathing club which has a contact form.

Further research on the path of the county boundary reveals that the county border between Wilshire and Somerset runs along the river-bed in Farleigh-Hungerford, which raises an unresolved question as to how the two authorities divide their responsibilities (if any) for the water.

Cotswold Homes' Proposals re Frome Road Site

On 8.10.26 George, Val, David Molian and myself met in the Pavilion with Planning Manager Ashley Grant from Cotswold Homes. His colleague James Durant, (the company's Head of Land and Planning) was scheduled to come, but sent apologies due to family issues.

Cotswold Homes is the proposed developer of the site to the North of Frome Road (numbered 12 in the community survey on possible options for future housing development 2029-2045)

James Ashley explained that the company intends to submit a pre-application proposal to SC before the end of this year. He explained a bit about the origins of this family company, and its policy of seeking preliminary face to face meetings wherever possible with Parish councils and near neighbours whose interests are likely to be impacted by any development projects they propose. They do so because they believe it helps to deal with concerns and foster better working relationships from the outset. We were shown examples of the types of housing they build, which appear to be sensitive to the local vernacular and building materials, include reasonable quantities of green landscaping, and sustainable energy and water collection systems. Their plan is to build approx. 58 houses on the site. James Ashley showed us a preliminary drawing but wished to ensure it included accurate details in all respects before sending a copy to the PC. David Molian has also done some follow-up online research on the Company's financial status, which appears satisfactory. Such detail as provided by James Ashley at the meeting is summarised below:

The proposed site extends north from the rear of the existing houses on Chatley Furlong to Tellisford Lane; it extends as far as Barnfield to the south.

Vehicle access would be from Frome Rd. Pedestiran access is proposed via Frome Rd and Tellisford Lane.

The application would be 'ful' i.e with all details submitted. This is anticipated for submission in early 2027.

Up to 60 dwellings – a mix of 2,3 and 4 beds.

They would propose the policy compliant level of 'affordable' houses.

Cotswold are a small/medium developer/builder. They do not sell sites once planning permission has been obtained. The site would be built out by them.

They would contact neighbours at an early stage and discuss concerns.

Drainage would use a SUDS system with outflow into a watercourse at the north of Tellisford Lane.

Solar panes/ASHP/electric vehicle charging would be standard

Farleigh-Hungerford's Defibrillator

The siting of the Defibrillator provided for Farleigh-Hungerford has this month been approved by the installer upon the exterior of the old School room. The equipment has been sitting inside for several months awaiting this. The building is not listed so planning permission is not necessary, but I have asked for formal written consent of the trustees of the building (as owners) to the work proceeding. There is a meeting of the Friends of Farleigh-Hungerford this weekend at which this will hopefully be completed.

Public Emergency Briefing Screening

On 9 October Barbi, Val and I attended a screening in the church of St Philip & St James of the Public Emergency Briefing. The event was well attended and generated much thought-provoking discussion amongst those who attended. I signed a petition/post card asking Anna Sabine MP to lobby Parliament to hold a televised Public Emergency Briefing on the impact of climate change in Britain (similar in style to the covid briefings). Individuals were encouraged to consider local initiatives which may make a collective difference such as switching energy provider to a company that only purchases 'clean electricity' and switching banking to one which declines to invest in fossil fuels.

Land ownership on public right of way in F-H

George and I have been investigating the ownership of a small parcel of land within the Parish which separates the private lane below the Castle at Farleigh-Hungerford from the fields owned by the Iford Estate, along which a public right of way runs towards Iford Manor and beyond. The area is not much larger than the Palairet Hall, and encompasses a pond fed by a fresh-water stream with a wooden bridge over the stream and a pedestrian metal gate at one end.

The issue of ownership arose initially when I contacted Iford estate about a tree which had fallen across the fences around the area, allowing cattle to escape into the lane, and also because the gate over the stream required mending. The Estate Manager for Iford Stephen Thompson arranged for the removal of the tree and for robust new fencing to be erected around the area, but clarified that the land comprising the pond, bridge and stepping-stone pathway does not belong to Iford. Fortunately, the Public Rights of Way Officer from Somerset Council Daniel Gordon has agreed to mend the gate when he is next in the area.

However, the dilemma as to who owns the patch of land remains unresolved. George applied to the Land Registry for a title map which appears to show that the patch of land falls within the title of the old Trout Farm which is currently held by Stephanie and David Campbell. However, when I advised them of this, they were emphatic that they do not own the land either, and neither do they want to own it. They emailed me the Land Registry title map which was supplied to them by their solicitor upon purchase of their property, and this appears to *exclude* the patch of land where the pond and bridge are situated.

If anyone can supply the PC with further information about the area in question and/or who has assumed responsibility for maintaining it all these years, that would be very helpful to know.

Catriona Murfitt

13.10.26

Vice- Chair's report to NSPPC meeting on Weds 14.10.26

Boules Court, Church Mead

The first relates to the boules court proposed for Church Mead. As you will know I am the PC's representative on Church Mead Committee. Options for the location and size of the Boules Court were discussed at a recent CMC Meeting when the possibility of locating this on the Village Green on Shepherds Mead was raised. The committee wished to explore any potential for this before committing to it being on Church Mead. I thus asked Cllr Brooks, a near neighbour of the VG landowner, to enquire whether she would be prepared to meet in order to establish whether this might be a possibility. She agreed to meet and this took place on 21st September. At the meeting the landowner stated that she would like to find some use for both the VG and the remainder land. She appeared very positive about the potential for enhancement of the VG by means of its use for Boules and other lawful pastimes.

In terms of the remainder land she was aware of the 2024 "2 x bungalow" proposal which had been the subject of discussions between her agent and the PC. She had been supportive of it at that time but currently had no firm view on what if anything to do with the remainder land.
She would however consider the matters and respond in due course."

Recent SCRAPP Meeting and what the changes to national planning policy means for us

I attended the SCRAPP meeting in Keinton Mandeville on 30th September together with Cllrs Lund and Molian. The PC is a member of Scrapp along with approx. 15 other PCs. Scrapp's objective is to share planning experiences together with the means of challenging the effects of inappropriate development.

It was a well-attended and informative meeting. There was a great deal of discussion about what was recognised as the unrealistic and unachievable housing targets set by the govt for Somerset and the likely consequences for the rural areas in particular where infrastructure is insufficient to support proposed expansion.

There were several helpful presentations, all backed up by slides. There was also a video address by Gideon Amos, MP for Taunton. He was gloomy about the consequences of the effects of both the imposition of "diktats" from government together with significant weakening of local democracy.

A common thread through the meeting was anger at the Government's changes and scepticism that the targets are achievable, realistic or necessary.

Possibly the most powerful (and troubling) presentation was made by Mark Reynolds, MD of Context Planning. He addressed the new NPPF and Scheme of Delegation with the aid of some excellent slides. He is happy for us to share these and I suggest that they are posted on the PC website.

His main message was that it is now much more difficult to get a scheme refused, especially where the LPA does not have a 5 year supply as is the case in the former Mendip area, now known as Somerset East. The new rules introduce an overarching presumption in favour of permitting proposals with very limited grounds for objection.

The changes to National Policy also mean that if Local Policy clashes with National, the weight attached to Local Policies is much reduced.

Furthermore the introduction of the national scheme of delegation significantly weakens the PC's influence and its ability to have applications referred to planning committee.
This reduced influence will become apparent in the coming months.

Determination of the current proposal for 8 houses on Fortescue West will fall under the new scheme. And the Chair has reported on the PC's informal meeting last week with Cotswold Homes who are proposing a development of approx. 60 houses north of the Frome Rd. Furthermore an outline application for approx. 50 dwellings at Norton Farm is anticipated shortly. These could potentially be determined by the Planning Officer in agreement with the Chair of the Planning Committee.

To make matters worse, in the light of the woeful Somerset East housing supply, currently around 3.2 years, together with a dreadful housing delivery record, the new government policy is to approve applications whether inside or outside the settlement boundary unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects.

The two most likely adverse effects to carry weight are if the site is not:
1. Physically well-related to an existing settlement
2. Of a scale that existing or proposed infrastructure can accommodate.
Poor design also carries significant weight.

An important tool is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, particularly if it allocates housing to meet the local identified need. Despite having recently passed Examination (for the third time) the NSP NP has yet to be sent to Referendum.

Furthermore the Somerset Local Plan is still three years away. We have no idea of how much development the parish will be allocated in that Plan. However it is not impossible that speculative applications will have provided all of that requirement-and more- by the time the Plan is adopted.

Particularly in the absence of a suitable NP the PC, together with the community, will soon need to address these -and possibly other- speculative applications in the light of new national policy and make some difficult calls when considering how best to respond.