

PUXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Puxton & Hewish: in the North Somerset Council Ward of Congresbury & Puxton

Clerk: Donald Hill - 18 Mitford Slade Court, Mendip Road, Yatton, North Somerset BS49 4JG

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Minutes of the Meeting Held at 7pm on Thursday January 2nd 2025

All meetings are held at 7.30pm in the Village Hall unless stated otherwise - please note new start time

Although under no obligation to, Dan Thomas, our NSC Ward Cllr, attends when possible

Present: Cllrs Lynda Redding), Jim Corbett, Mel Ellis, Peter Penfold.

In Attendance: Don Hill (Clerk)

Public Attendance: 0

001/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Victoria Butterfield, Clayton Penfold, Helen Riddell. NSC Cllr Dan Thomas

002/25 DECLARATIONS: *(Dispensations apply to Cllrs re percept setting, and Village Hall matters)*

None

003/25 PUBLIC SESSION: *15 minutes - Contributions are limited to 3 minutes: they should be concise and to the point*

None

004/25 LAST MEETING MINUTES + Matters Arising:

- i. **Minutes:** December 5th 2024 minutes were agreed and signed.
- ii. **Meeting Times:** Members felt that a return to the pre-covid meeting start time of 7.30pm would be helpful to them, giving crucial extra time between stopping work and needing to be at the meeting. It was unanimously agreed that a return to a 7.30 meeting start would be implemented with immediate effect. **Clerk to implement.**

005/25 PLANNING *Details at <https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/>*

i. **New:** None

ii. **Decisions Due:**

- (a) **19/P/0815/FUL** Puxton Park car park.
- (b) **22/P/3067/OUT** Haybow Village (Banwell PC).
- (c) **24/P/0143/FUL:** Gypsy/Traveller site below Heathfield Park
- (d) **24/P/1658/FUL Full Quart** Change of use
- (e) **23/P/2593/FUL** Update re Gypsy/Traveller site opposite The Full Quart.
- (f) **24/P/2117/FUL** Garden Park Roofing.

iii. **Approved:** **24/P/1619/FUH** Westerly Cottage extensions. **24/P/1988/AOC** Cider House, The Grange, West Wick - Discharge of conditions.

iv. **Refused:** **24/P/2433/NMA** Villa Farm amendment to application 22/P/1414/CQA.

006/25 FINANCE

- i. **2024-25 Accounts:** Accounts to date were reviewed and reconciled with the bank statement.
- ii. **Clerks Overtime:** Cllr Redding reported that the Clerk had put in considerable extra work of late for which he has not claimed overtime, as he is entitled to do. Cllr Ellis

said at least some recognition should be made and proposed that the Clerk add additional pay by way of overtime for one 7.5 hour working day. The meeting agreed, insistently and unanimously to this proposal. As pay is done via standing order, **Clerk to prepare an invoice for payment authorisation at the February meeting.**

- iii. **2025-26 Budget:** The request from NSC for a contribution of £1,000 towards funding their Public Rights of way workload was discussed. However, with no assurances that the sum would be ring fenced for and spent on footpath works within the parish it was proposed by Cllr Ellis, seconded by Cllr Redding and unanimously decided that this Parish Council will not make the requested contribution to NSC. The draft budget and notes were then discussed and agreed (see the Annex below). **Clerk to request the indicated precept of £12752 from NSC.**
- iv. **Payments to Authorise: HMRC PAYE** Oct/Nov/Dec - £230.03 was agreed via email and ratified here. **Vision ICT Ltd** - the annual website fee was agreed for payment and authorised by signatures to the invoice. **Clerk to pay.**
- v. **Paying HMRC by Direct Debit:** This was not approved at the October 2024 meeting. Although the concerns re HMRC taking monies in error have been assuaged, the decision cannot be reversed for 6 months, ie before May 2025.

007/25

PARISH MATTERS

- i. **A370: St Annes School Signage and Speed Issues:**
 - (a) **Police DCB** (data collection box): erection awaited.
 - (b) **Gully overflows:** contact to provide pictures of flooding for NSC.
 - (c) **Congresbury-end School warning sign repair:** Still not working.
 - (d) **Road Safety:** St Annes Speed Watch scheme awaiting training schedule.
 - (e) **Speed Indicator Device (SID)** This is now up and running near St Annes School. It will be moved around various locations within the parish agreed with NSC. Data on traffic numbers and speeds will be collected and shared with the police and other parties in relation to road safety and highway needs strategies. A huge thank you to Avon and Somerset Police for granting the Parish Council £5000 from its SID fund which made the purchase of this equipment possible.
- ii. **Fly-tipping:** Dolemoor Lane access gates. Cllr P Penfold raised the possibility that gating this type of drove may not be a simple procedure, even if it is a possible solution. Whilst present energies are focussing on parish maintenance along our highways and footpaths, the problems of Dolemoor Lane will continue to remain under review.
- iii. **A370 Footpath:** Enquiries locally did not uncover information on a pavement clearing device: Cllr P Penfold described such a piece of equipment. It seemed to be an item that would be too expensive to purchase but, with NSC Highways agreement, may be something that could be hired-in as needed for the specific task of keeping the A370 footpath clear - a task which NSC's current financial circumstance does not enable them to commit to. With this additional information **Cllr Redding to make more enquiries.**
- iv. **A370 Central Refuges:** Near the bus stops at the Full Quart and by Moorland Park. Applications have been made for these two schemes online via the NSC integrated

Transport Scheme Pipeline. One of these applications has been acknowledged. The outcome of both applications is awaited.

v. Parish Maintenance:

- (a) **Waste Movement and Disposal Licence application to be progressed by Cllr Riddell and the Parish Maintenance contractor.**
- (b) **Governance:** The new risk assessments will be included in the review of Governance documents that will come before the February meeting for approval in relation to the 2025-26 financial year.
- (c) **Village Green Litter Bin:** This prompted a considered discussion. NSC either want this Council to take on ownership and emptying of the bin, or they will remove it. The bin does not appear to have been much used over the years, but recently there are reports of it being used for domestic waste and having black bags left as fly-tipping beside it. The instinct of Members was that they would like the bin to remain. However, given the cost and management issues other small parishes experience in servicing of bin emptying contracts, the meeting decided by majority decision (one Cllr was neutral on the issue) to ask NSC to remove the bin. **Clerk to so inform NSC.**

008/25 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Corbett: remains concerned about the potholes and highway edges which cause a serious hazard to motorists and other road users on the narrow lanes of the parish. Whilst this is a concern of all Members, it does seem to be a problem about which NSC Highways can take little immediate action.

Cllr Redding: In line with the ongoing concerns of Members and of constant email harassment, Cllr Redding reported that the six monthly renewal of the Vexatious Behaviour Order has been sent to the resident concerned. There are a range of complaints from this person about the Council that are currently before the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). These largely concern historical issues relating to accounts matters that have already been considered and adjudicated on by external auditors. Cllr Redding remains assiduous in her contacts with ICO regarding these matters.

009/25 NEXT MEETING

Thursday February 6th 2025 **at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

ANNEX RE MINUTE 006/25 iii

PUXTON PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR

EXPENSES HEAD	25-26 BUDGET	24-25 BUDGET	% DIFFERENCE
Clerk's Pay	£4815.00	£4584.00	5.0
Clerk's Expenses	£412.00	£412.00	0.0
Hall Hire Fee	£300.00	£300.00	0.0
Parish Maintenance	£3600.00	£2600.00	38.5
Insurance, Subscriptions, Audit, Legal	£650.00	£650.00	0.0
Publicity	£200.00	£200.00	0.0
Other Costs	£300.00	£300.00	0.0
Website	£400.00	£250.00	60.0
Bank Charges	£75.00	£75.00	0.0
Election Provision	£500.00	£500.00	0.0
Capital Provision	£1500.00	£1000.00	50.0
PRECEPT	£12752.00	£10871.00	17.3

NOTES

Clerk's Pay increase is +5%.

Clerk's Expenses have not increased since January 2016.

Hall Fee has not increased since at least late 2015.

Parish Maintenance Includes costs the parish will have to bear due to the reduction of services via North Somerset Council.

Insurance, Subscriptions Audit and Legal has gone from £550 to £650. The ALCA sub is dependant on parish population and is due to go up. If our internal auditor changes there is a provision for the negotiation of the fee. With insurance premiums rising, there is also margin for a possible increase of premium.

Publicity There has been none during 2023-24 (the Annual Parish Meeting Agenda is within the Clerk's monthly expenses). If we are to circulate flyers we will need the £200 budget, which remains unchanged from the 2023-24. It will allow for one double sided leaflet per month. A new Clerk is likely to expect all this work to be farmed out, which will increase this cost.

Other Costs is a catch all for unforeseen expenses.

Website budget remains the same - in addition to the annual charge there is a provision for an upgrade, and a cushion for additional charges, such as for acknowledging of significant events - jubilees, royal deaths etc.

Bank Charges contain a provision for a small increase and for the use of cheques or paying in where necessary.

Election Provision in view of increasing costs this should be nearer £3000 for future elections.

Capital Provision has stood budgeted at £1000 since its introduction. As we can see, it takes years to build the fund, but just one highway project to decimate it.

The Precept Increase: With Principal Authorities - NSC in our case - funnelling costs down to town and parish councils due to the squeezing of their own funding from Central Government and the annual government-imposed caps on their own precept increases, parishes like ours, that have no income generating assets, have to be realistic about how much they need to operate with from year to year.

2023-24 Accounts: Again this year the Parish accounts were challenged by referral to the External Auditors. This cost £900, which the auditors pointed out in their decision not to proceed with the challenge, is an unfortunate additional and un-budgeted cost to our Council Tax payers.