

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11th NOVEMBER 2024
AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, NORTON VILLAGE HALL

24/2126 PRESENT:

Cllr. S More (Chairman), Cllr. B. Matraives (Vice-Chair), Cllr. J Cole, Cllr. J Harris, Cllr. C Riley, Cllr. P Gartrell, Cllr R Reid, Cllr. Mike Hewitson (Unitary Councillor) and Mrs. L. Brooks (Clerk). There were no members of the public present.

24/2127 APOLOGIES:

Cllr. Oliver Patrick (Unitary Councillor)

24/2128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report

24/2129 PUBLIC TIME

24/2129/a Public Time

Nothing to report

24/2129b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

24/21029/c Unitary Councillor report:

Unitary Councillor Mike Hewitson was present. He asked for an update on Minchington Wall. He spoke about the latest round of redundancies which will affect all departments. He informed the PC that Ham Hill Visitor Centre was still on track as this was Lottery funded.

24/2129/d CLT Update:

Cllr Harris reported that the AGM had been well attended. They had 3 new board members. The shop sales were still good. A coffee machine was currently on trial and more local suppliers were being utilised.

24/2129/e HYG Report

Cllr Riley reported that HYG were struggling with a shortage of board members due to some recent resignations. It was still not known if Stoke PC would be helping to support the youth group with any funding for 2025-26. The Chair of HYG will be contacting local schools to try and get some staff help.

24/2129/f Allotments Report

Nothing to report

24/2129/g Bus Service Report

Cllr Harris gave a bus report to the PC informing them that the bus fare would be rising from £2 to £3 from January 2025.

24/2130 MINUTES

The Minutes from the October meeting were circulated. They were approved and signed.

Proposed: Cllr. Cole

Seconded: Cllr. Harris

Agreed unanimously.

24/2131 MATTERS ARISING

24/2131/a Speeding in Great St – Further response from Highways

The clerk reported on the latest response from Highways, informing the PC that the road markings had now been repainted. With regards to the data Highways receive. She explained that the speed compliance data comes from hundreds of thousands of connected vehicles that have GPS devices installed such as vehicle trackers & sat nav devices. The data is captured across a 12-month period from April to March aligning with financial years and analysed to produce annual average speeds for seven individual time periods which covers the full 24-hour a day period. She explained that if Norton sub Hamdon Parish Council would like data to interrogate, Somerset Council can deploy speed reading radars on behalf of the Parish Council. Based on the information Highways already have available they do not believe there is evidence of a speeding issue therefore there is no operational need for Somerset Council to have this information. Norton sub Hamdon would have to fund the radar, these are currently charged at £225 per radar per week. The Parish Council felt that they don't have spare money in this years budget to do this and will monitor the situation and report any issues to the Police.

24/2131/a Spare pads for defibrillator

The Parish Council discussed the need to buy spare pads for the new defibrillator as once the machine has been used new pads are required. It was agreed that the clerk would only buy new pads after the defibrillator had been used and we would not hold any in stock. The price is approximately £70 per set. Cllr Riley requested the link to watch a short YouTube video on how to use the defibrillator.

Action: Clerk

24/2131/b Local Plan

The Parish Council discussed the Local plan questionnaire. The clerk read out the responses that had been received to date. Once the clerk has received everyone's comments then she will reply on behalf of the Parish Council. The clerk reiterated the importance of doing this and explained that The Local Plan guides decisions on future development proposals and addresses the needs and opportunities of the area. Topics that Local Plans usually cover include housing, employment and shops and they also identify where development should take place and areas where development should be restricted. She urged the Parish Councillors to respond as this was their chance to have their say about any future development in Norton over the next few years and any issues that the village are currently suffering from or services that need improving before any more housing could be considered.

Action: Clerk

24/2131/c Consultation on division boundaries for Somerset Council

The clerk had forwarded a copy of the boundaries consultation for everyone to respond to. Closing date for responses is 20th January.

24/2131/d Clerk's update

The clerk gave a report on the first clerks meeting between several neighbouring clerks. The purpose of coming together is not only to form an active Clerks group between local parishes where information/contacts and cost of services could be shared, to enable greater efficiency at better costs and to give us greater buying powers, but to also support and offer advice to each other on subjects that others might have better knowledge on. It was hoped that forming a group would give parishes a stronger voice on local matters, including planning and highways. It was made very clear from many clerks who attended the meeting, that Parish Councils were fed up with the lack of support and communication from SC, yet were expected to pick up the pieces with regards to a failing county council.

24/2132 PLANNING:

24/2132/a Matters For Report

Nothing to report.

24/2132/b Decisions Notified:

Nothing to report

24/2132/c Applications for consideration

Application Number: 24/02371/HOU

Proposal: Single Storey Extension to West Side of Barnstone

Location: Barnstone Great Street Norton Sub Hamdon

The Parish Council had no objections to this planning application.

Action: Clerk

24/2133 FINANCE:

24/2133/a Matters for report:

Draft Budget: The Clerk/RFO and Chair delivered the draft budget to the Parish Council. They explained the reason for the increases within certain categories including budgeting for the complete transfer of ownership of Minchington Rec, which is still the plan of the Parish Council. The chair explained that this is not going to be a five-minute process due to the number of Councils trying to do the same thing and the lack of resources at SC in their devolution team and legal team. She explained that obviously, taking on a second rec with a play area created many extra costs, including insurance, maintenance of the the play area, grass cutting, tree and rose maintenance, plus ring-fencing an amount every year towards new play equipment (like the PC currently do for the main rec) plus ring-fencing an amount every year for future wall repairs. However, the Parish Council are fully committed to safeguarding this piece of land and look forward to securing it and seeing it look as good as the main rec under Parish

Council ownership. The Clerk/RFO had prepared explanatory notes to go alongside the draft budget to help explain reasons behind other increases.

The Chair discussed the need to build our reserves for future services and repairs to highways that wouldn't be covered under statutory services. The £10,000 that was added to the budget for 24-25 which has not been used, would be ringfenced and saved for that purpose only for the future. A further £10,000 would be added to the budget for 2025-26, again to cover for highways related issues, as the cost of any highway's repairs would be huge. Furthermore, the chair outlined that the clerk had also received notification from the Rights of Way Officer for Norton that they will be reduced to four people, with one person covering each of the former districts and that they would be passing on the responsibility of many services to the parish council to fund from next year as Somerset Council will likely only be able to address footpath issues that are life-threatening (typically bridge-related) due to limited resources in officer time and funds. The chair explained that this is another category that the clerk/RFO has had to add to the budget so we can maintain footpaths.

The budget will not be signed off until the December meeting and the clerk/RFO will keep the parish council updated of any further changes. In the meantime, the Parish Councillors were asked to go away and study the proposals, so they understood the need to increase the precept again next year.

24/2133/b Matters for resolution

A new reserves policy was approved and signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr. Gartrell

Seconded: Cllr. Riley

Agreed unanimously

24/2133/c Invoices Payable – all paid via the Unity Trust Bank

Louise Brooks	Democratic services – October 2024	£	963.48
HMRC	Employee NI & PAYE & Employer NI to pay – Oct 24	£	261.30
Louise Brooks	Home Office Allowance – Oct 2024 – Government set	£	26.00
Louise Brooks	Oct Parish Council Office supplies – Includes paper, ink and other office consumables, postage.	£	44.00
Steve Collier	Restoration of 13 street signs @ £75 per sign	£	975.00
SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks)	Annual membership	£	120.00

Proposed: Cllr. Reid

Seconded: Cllr. Matraives

Agreed unanimously

24/2134 VILLAGE HALL:

Cllr Cole gave an update to the PC on the plans to improve the air circulation in the hall.

24/2135 RECREATION GROUND:

Nothing to report

24/2136 CORRESPONDENCE:

24/2137 FOOTPATHS:

The Chair reported a hole in the ground on the footpath between Broadmead Lane and Little Norton.

Cllr Cole will add some hardcore to the area.

Action: Cllr Cole

24/2138 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Nothing to report

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm

The next monthly meeting will be held on MONDAY 9th DECEMBER 2024 at 7.30 pm in the village hall committee room.