

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13th JANUARY 2025
AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, NORTON VILLAGE HALL

25/2152 PRESENT:

Cllr. S More (Chairman), Cllr. B. Matraives (Vice-Chair), Cllr. J Harris, Cllr R Reid, Cllr. Mike Hewitson (Unitary Councillor) and Mrs. L. Brooks (Clerk). There was 1 member of the public present.

25/2153 APOLOGIES:

Cllr. J Cole

Cllr. C Riley

Cllr. P Gartrell

Cllr. Oliver Patrick (Unitary Councillor)

25/2154 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report

25/2155 PUBLIC TIME

25/2155/a Public Time

Nothing to report

25/2155/b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

25/2155/c Unitary Councillor report:

Unitary Councillor Mike Hewitson was present at the meeting. He updated the PC on the devolution of assets being a very slow process, and it could take anything up to 18 months before the process can begin for Minchington Rec. This is due to lack of resources at SC in both the devolution and legal departments. Town Council have been given preference and once again the parish councils are pushed to the back of the queue. Cllr Hewitson said he would do all he could to get our application started. He had spoken to Sally Stark from the devolution team who suggested we have an SLA agreement with SC with regards to maintaining Minchington Rec - this would allow the PC to take on the maintenance / responsibility whilst the legal process rumbles on in the background. This would mean that the PC would pay for the maintenance of the rec but it is still owned by SC. The Parish Council were not keen to do this and felt it would not be a good way to spend public money on maintaining something that was still owned by SC, when SC still had responsibilities to maintain the rec themselves. The Parish Council reiterated to Cllr Hewitson the need to get the transfer started as we were very keen to safeguard the rec for the village's future. The Parish Council are concerned by the current state of the rec and the lack of cuts due to SC cutback that it will see. The Parish Council felt they may have to consider paying (either Somerset Landscapes or SC to cut it every month as well). Once the cutting season starts, it is likely that SC will only cut it once a month (another service they are cutting back on). This would not be enough for Minchington rec so the Parish Council may have to pay for an extra cut every month (so in theory it gets cut twice a month). The clerk will be keeping the pressure on SC to get our transfer of asset started.

Minchington wall: Unitary Councillor Hewitson discussed the wall and asked to see past correspondence to see if he can help with the collapsed part that still hasn't been repaired. He asked the Parish Council whether we would consider excluding the wall from the transfer of Minchington as the wall repairs are going to be ongoing every year due to the instability of the wall. The Parish Council thought this was a good idea. This would mean the wall would stay in the ownership of Somerset Council – the PC felt it was definitely an idea to be considered.

UC Hewitson felt that we should not adjust our proposed precept because of the delay with the transfer of assets of Minchington Rec. He felt it was important that we secured that money now so when we were contacted by SC to start the process, we were ready to go at any time.

25/2155/d CLT Update:

Cllr Harris updated the Parish Council. She reported that the shop had had a very good Christmas period with its sales, although January was now very quiet. She also informed the Parish Council that there was a house available at Minchington on a shared ownership basis. The Chair suggested that Cllr Harris contact the clerk at Chiselborough Parish Council to get him to spread the word around that area as well.

25/2155/e HYG Report

Cllr Riley wasn't at the meeting. However, she had sent a report to the clerk prior to the meeting. She informed the clerk that the HYG meeting on 19 December was very positive with a new secretary and treasurer appointed.

Many of the suggestions to liaise with local schools have been followed through with promising results. There are ongoing conversations with Stoke PC regarding funding and more sessions at Stoke for the young people there if more funding is forthcoming.

Janet Richards presented an interesting report of future projects for the group including the flower planting at the village hall, supporting on going work for D of E students and was enthusiastic to have a stall at the flower show and to encourage entries from HYG. HYG continue to be grateful to Norton PC for their continuing support. The next meeting will be 25 Feb.

25/2155/f Allotments Report

Cllr Matraves reported that the majority of tenants had paid their rent for the forthcoming year.

25/2155/g Bus Service Report

Cllr Harris gave an update to the Parish Council on the bus service.

25/2156 MINUTES

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

Proposed: Cllr. Matraves

Seconded: Cllr. Reid

Agreed unanimously.

25/2157 MATTERS ARISING

25/2157/a Budget and setting of precept

After several intensive budget meetings, the Parish Council finally set the budget and precept for 2025-26.

The Chair and clerk explained that the expenditure in this current financial year (ending March 2025) was estimated to be in the region of £37,000. However, in the next financial year (April 2025- March 26), there would be some big changes which will have a large impact on Parish Council funds. This would be due to Somerset Council cutting services. In order to maintain and protect the existing services, the PC would have to fund them (including weekly emptying of dog and litter bins, grit bins and some footpath and highway services). On top of this, The PC fully intends to have the ownership of Minchington Rec transferred to the Parish Council. Even though this process is going to take months to complete due to the lack of resources at SC, it was felt that after speaking to Cllr Hewitson, it was important to secure the funds now so we would have the funding (incl. legal costs) ready to start as soon as SC was able to. The clerk informed the PC that this money would go into a high interest account and be ring-fenced for this purpose only.

The clerk explained that for the next financial year, our total expenditure was estimated to be in the region of £69,000. The Parish Council felt they had no option but to raise the precept by 35% so they were prepared for the next financial year.

The clerk informed the PC she would break the figures down in the newsletter article, so people could understand what this meant in terms of extra on their council tax.

Housing Band	Number of dwellings per band	2024-25 cost per week	2025-26 cost per week	Increase per week
A	7	£1.77	£2.32	.55p
B	62	£2.06	£2.71	.65p
C	71	£2.36	£3.09	.73p
D	43	£2.65	£3.48	.83p
E	72	£3.24	£4.25	£1.01
F	60	£3.83	£5.02	£1.19
G	28	£4.42	£5.80	£1.38
H	3	£5.30	£6.96	£1.66

A resolution was made to increase the precept by 35% to £60,750.00

Proposed: Cllr. Matraves

Seconded: Cllr. Harris

Agreed unanimously.

25/2157/b Minchington rec update

See Unitary Councillor report above.

25/2158 PLANNING:

25/2158/a Matters For Report

Nothing to report.

25/2158/b Decisions Notified:

Ref. No: 24/02371/HOU - Barnstone Great Street Norton Sub Hamdon

Single Storey Extension to West Side of Barnstone

Status: Approved

25/2158/c Applications for consideration

Nothing to report

25/2159 FINANCE:

25/2159/a Matters for report:

End of third quarter of accounts

NAT WEST BANK ACCOUNTS:

Current account	£	100.00
Reserve Account	£	5461.71
Total	£	5,561.71

UNITY TRUST BANK

Current Account	£	2,341.87
Instant Saver	£	36,462.32
TOTAL	£	38,804.19

Total in both banks £ 44,365.90

Total as cash book £ 44,365.90

The clerk informed the Parish Council that the accounts would now go to the internal auditor for checking and approval.

Action: Clerk

VAT Return: The clerk informed the Parish Council that she had just completed the VAT return for the sum of £763.74.

25/2159/b Matters for resolution

Nothing to report

25/2159/c Invoices Payable – all paid via the Unity Trust Bank

Louise Brooks	Democratic services – Dec 2024	£	1,002.80
HMRC	Employee NI & PAYE & Employer NI to pay – Dec 24	£	285.75
Louise Brooks	Home Office Allowance – Dec 2024 – Government set	£	26.00
Louise Brooks	December Parish Council Office supplies – Includes paper, ink and other office consumables, postage.	£	44.00
Down2Earth SW Ltd	Grounds maintenance, boundary stone trim, drain clearance Period: Oct – Dec 2024	£	328.50
Somerset Landscapes Ltd	Grounds maintenance Oct – Dec 2024 inv no SLL35350	£	636.08
PATA (UK)	Payroll and pension management services Oct-Dec 24	£	54.45
Somerset Council	Operational playground inspections 2024-25 – main rec	£	127.20

Proposed: Cllr. Reid

Seconded: Cllr. Matraves

Agreed unanimously

25/2160 VILLAGE HALL:

Nothing to report

25/2161 RECREATION GROUND:

Nothing to report

25/2162 CORRESPONDENCE:

All correspondence received had been circulated to all Parish Councillors.

25/2163 FOOTPATHS: The Chair reported she'd received more complaints about the horses in the field going from Broadmead Lane to Little Norton. The clerk was asked to request that the owners get in touch via the newsletter and suggest that signs were put on the gates.

25/2164 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Nothing to report

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm

The next monthly meeting will be held on MONDAY 10th FEBRUARY 2025 at 7.30 pm in the village hall committee room.