

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2025
AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, NORTON VILLAGE HALL

25/2268 PRESENT:

Cllr. S More (Chairman), Cllr. J Harris, Cllr. P Gartrell, Cllr. C Riley, Cllr R Reid and Mrs. L. Brooks (Clerk). There were two members of HYG and two members of the public present.

25/2269 APOLOGIES:

Cllr. B. Matraves (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. J Cole

Cllr. Oliver Patrick (Somerset Councillor) – ongoing apologies

25/2270 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report

25/2271 PUBLIC TIME

25/2271/a Public Time

Nothing to report

25/2271/b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

25/2271/c Somerset Councillor report:

Cllr Hewitson attended the meeting and provided an update on Somerset Council's budget setting for 2026–27, noting that it currently appears likely the funding shortfall will be bridged. He informed the Parish Council about the new weekly highways defect repair list now being circulated to all clerks.

The Clerk requested the report from the recent CCTV investigation of the drains on New Road; Cllr Hewitson agreed to follow this up and provide the findings. The ongoing drainage issue at Skinners Lane, reported annually for more than five years, was raised again, and Cllr Hewitson asked the Clerk to resend the list previously issued to Jon Nicholson at Highways and he would chase. The Clerk also requested clarification regarding the current repair works at Little Norton. The Chair confirmed that the road will be closed for approximately 10 days.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Hewitson further updated the Council on the Ham Hill Visitor Centre, which is expected to open in early December.

25/2271/d CLT Update:

Nothing to report

25/2271/e HYG Report

See below

25/2271/f Allotments Report

Nothing to report

25/2271/g Bus Service Report

Nothing to report

25/2272 MINUTES

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

Proposed: Cllr. More

Seconded: Cllr. Gartrell

Agreed unanimously.

25/2273 MATTERS ARISING

25/2273/a Hamdon Youth Group – Annual Report presented by J Bailey

Mr Bailey presented a report on the past year at HYG, outlining the challenges encountered and the changes introduced following its separation from Stoke sub Hamdon. He expressed his gratitude to the Parish Council for their continued and unwavering support.

The youth worker in attendance provided an update on current attendance levels and engagement across different age groups.

The Chair of the Parish Council, Sue More, thanked Mr Bailey, who is retiring as Chair of HYG after many years of dedicated service. She then noted that the Clerk would confirm the outcome of funding for 2026–27 in due course, once the Parish Council has approved the budget for that year.

Action: Clerk

25/2273/b Norton Community Matters – donation of a new bench for the rec – installation required

The Chair reported that Norton Community Matters had generously donated a new bench to be installed at the top of the recreation field, replacing the existing bench which is in poor condition. The hard standing is already in place. The Clerk will contact Down to Earth SW Ltd and Cllr Coles to install the bench once it has arrived. For security, the bench will be delivered to the Clerk's home address and collected from there for installation.

Action: Clerk/Cllr Cole

25/2273/c **Update on devolution of assets – Minchington Rec & Barn Orchard Green**

The clerk provided an update on the devolution of both assets. The transfer is currently in progress, with the Parish Council's solicitor liaising with the Somerset Council land manager, who is seeking guidance within SC regarding the removal of the pre-emption clause.

25/2273/d **Allotment footpath – update.**

The Chair gave an update on the allotment footpath. The RoW Officer has met Bagnell Farm and discussed a way forward. They are proposing to provide a permissive route, approximately 20m from the definitive line of the path. As soon as it has been agreed work will commence.

25/2273/e **Fencing – recreation field**

The clerk presented the quotations she had obtained for the installation of new post-and-rail fencing and a wooden gate at the recreation field entrance. It was unanimously agreed to proceed with Montague Countryside Services. The clerk will liaise with the company regarding timescales, as the work must be completed before the end of the current financial year.

In addition, it was agreed to install a bollard behind the new gate to enhance security. The clerk will obtain quotations for the supply and installation of a single bollard and report back with prices at the next Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk

25/2273/e **Bollards/stone at Minchington Recreation for security**

The clerk has been in discussions with a bollard company regarding the suitability of either metal or wooden bollards for the open side of Minchington Recreation Field. This matter will be considered once the asset transfer has been completed. Based on measurements provided by Cllr Cole, approximately 50 bollards would be required for the area in question. The Parish Council felt that a row of 50 metal bollards would be visually intrusive in this rural setting, as well as very expensive. An alternative option, using large pieces of locally quarried hamstone, was considered far more appropriate by the Council, with 2 or 3 collapsible bollards installed at the far end to enable access for maintenance vehicles. Cllr Cole has received an initial quote for the stones and will confirm their size. This will go on the December agenda for further discussion.

Action: Cllr Cole

25/2273/e **Draft Budget - preparation for 2026-27**

The clerk had prepared a draft budget and distributed a hard copy to each member of the parish council. She reported that the document is still fluid, with new quotes for work arriving daily, along with additional information and costs for services being passed down from Somerset Council—such as election expenses, which were previously subsidized by the now-abolished District Council.

The Chair thanked the clerk for her diligent work in preparing the draft, recognizing the significant effort involved. The Chair then explained the reasons for the proposed increases in various areas – including election costs (we must ensure that funds are always set aside in the bank to cover a standalone election, as well as to prepare for the next scheduled election in May 2027 which we will be expected to part fund with SC),

Minchington Rec and Barn Orchard Green - She explained that taking on a second recreation ground, which is not in the best condition, naturally incurs additional costs, all of which must be reflected in the budget. The Chair also emphasized the importance of building up reserves to ensure the council is prepared for unforeseen expenses.

It was noted that the budget and the required precept will hopefully not need to be formally agreed and approved until the January meeting, although this will depend on the date set by Somerset Council for precept submissions. The clerk will provide any updates to the draft as things change.

Chair asked all Parish Councillors to review the document carefully and raise any concerns if they find inaccuracies, omissions, or items they feel should not be included.

Action: Clerk

25/2273/f **Bike club request**

The Chair discussed an enquiry from a resident of Chiselborough regarding the possibility of setting up a children's bike club on the Norton recreation field. After consideration, it was unanimously agreed that the field was not a suitable location. The Chair explained that, following recent heavy rainfall, the ground is too wet for children to cycle safely. The MUGA could not be used, as it is regularly occupied by children playing ball games, its intended purpose. Furthermore, the recreation field is a public space used by children of all ages, and it was felt that young children learning to ride a bike needed a solid, safe surface, rather than a wet, muddy field where there was a risk of collisions or being struck by a stray ball. The clerk will respond to the enquiry accordingly.

Action: Clerk

25/2274 **PLANNING:**

25/2274/a **Matters For Report**

Nothing to report

25/2274/b Decisions Notified:

Application Number: 25/00206/FUL

Proposal: Erection of Two Bungalows - Location: Hopes Little Street Norton Sub Hamdon

The Parish Council was very disappointed to learn that this application has been approved. Despite objections from the Parish Council, Somerset Councillor Mike Hewitson, and seven members of the public, the planning officer granted permission for the two bungalows. Although Cllr. Hewitson presented a strong case against the development, it was supported by Cllr. Oliver Patrick (also Vice Chair of the Planning Committee) and the Chair of Planning South, Cllr. Jason Baker.

The Parish Council remains concerned that the quiet rural character of Little Street will be significantly affected by increased traffic from the addition of two large bungalows, and that the development will place additional pressure on an already over-capacity sewage system.

25/2274/c Applications for consideration

Nothing to report

25/2275 FINANCE:

25/2275/a Matters for report:

25/2275/b Matters for resolution

Nothing to report

25/2275/c Invoices Payable – all paid via the Unity Trust Bank

Louise Brooks	Democratic services – October	£ 1,198.30
HMRC	Employee NI & PAYE & Employer NI to pay OCT	£ 216.03
Louise Brooks	Home Office Allowance – OCT 2025 – Government set	£ 26.00
Louise Brooks	OCT Parish Council Office supplies – Includes paper, ink and other office consumables, postage.	£ 44.00
Louise Brooks	Microsoft 365 annual subscription for pc laptop plus cloud storage	£ 84.99

Proposed: Cllr. Reid

Seconded: Cllr. Gartrell

Agreed unanimously

25/2276 VILLAGE HALL:

Cllr. Harris reported that the new front door was installed on the morning of 10th November. The Clerk confirmed that a copy of the invoice had been received. The Parish Council had previously resolved, in September, to contribute £470 towards the cost of the new door. The Clerk was instructed to liaise with the Treasurer to arrange payment via UTB, subject to authorization by two Parish Councillors

Action: Clerk

25/2277 RECREATION GROUND:

Please look at Matters arising – new fencing agreed and bike club refused.

25/2278 CORRESPONDENCE:

All correspondence received has been circulated to all Parish Councillors.

25/2279 FOOTPATHS:

Please look at Matters arising – allotment footpath update

25/2280 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Cllr. Reid reported that areas of the mound on Minchington Close had been dug out, apparently to create a bike track. The Clerk was instructed to report this to SC.

The Chair reported that she had looked at the top of Highwoods footpath. The Chair had seen the loose wire, which had been like it for years. The clerk was asked to look to see if it had a footpath number next to it on the map and report to the relevant department at SC.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

The next monthly meeting will be held on MONDAY 8th DECEMBER 2025 at 7.30 pm in the village hall committee room.