

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12th JANUARY 2026
AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, NORTON VILLAGE HALL

26/2293 PRESENT:

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

26/2294 APOLOGIES:

Cllr. B. Matraives (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Mike Hewitson (Somerset Councillor)

Cllr. Oliver Patrick (Somerset Councillor) – ongoing apologies

26/2295 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report

26/2296 PUBLIC TIME

26/2296/a Public Time

Nothing to report

26/2296/b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

26/2296/c Somerset Councillor report:

Nothing was reported due to the absence of a Somerset Councillor

26/2296/d CLT Update:

Nothing to report

26/2296/e HYG Report

26/2296/f Allotment Report: Cllr Matraives was not present at the meeting, but he had spoken to the clerk beforehand and informed her that the allotments' secretary intends to step down in February.

26/2296/g Bus Service Report

Nothing to report

26/2297 MINUTES

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

Proposed: Cllr. Reid

Seconded: Cllr. Riley

Agreed unanimously.

26/2298 MATTERS ARISING

26/2298/a Report following the Wessex Water meeting in Little Street (Cllr More & Cllr Reid)

A meeting was held on the 22nd December 2025 between Wessex Water (3 representatives), residents from Little Street and other parts of the village plus two Parish Council representatives (Chair Cllr More and Cllr Reid).

The meeting was productive, with residents raising a number of ongoing concerns.

Residents expressed significant frustration that sewer flooding has been occurring for many years and that there appears to be no immediate solution. Wessex Water advised that they do have further plans to investigate infiltration and undertake sewer relining works where required, as carried out during 2025, to help reduce infiltration.

Wessex Water explained that the primary issue is the large volume of surface water entering the public sewer network. This is not only due to infiltration but also from additional sources contributing to the system.

The option of enlarging the sewers and pumping station was discussed. The team explained that this would require a larger rising main and an alternative discharge location, and that such an approach would likely transfer the problem elsewhere rather than address it at the source.

Residents also raised concerns about fluvial flooding from the brook. Wessex Water clarified that this does not fall under their responsibility, as they are responsible only for foul sewers in the area.

The team discussed potential mitigation measures. They will investigate the feasibility of installing pressure-sealing plates on manholes; however, they explained it is essential that properties are first protected with non-return valves (NRVs).

Installation of all relevant NRVs will take time, as some properties will require the construction of new chambers or additional sealing works to prevent surface water and groundwater infiltration. Once adequate property protection is in place, they will further assess the installation of pressure-sealing plates.

During the site visit, the WW team inspected the network and identified several locations with clear infiltration flows.

Operational Plan Moving Forward:

- Investigate the installation of NRVs for six properties on Little Street
- Construct chambers to house NRVs where required
- Following completion of property protection, assess and install seven pressure-sealed manhole covers and frames to reduce flooding
- Monitor the network and assess which chambers experience increased flows as flooding locations change

26/2298/b **Update on devolution of assets – Minchington Rec & Barn Orchard Green**

The Clerk reported that at the beginning of the new year, she had chased the solicitor for an update. She went on to explain that there is now a new point of contact at SC, which has further delayed the devolution process, as the solicitor had not been notified of this change by SC. The Clerk will chase the solicitor for a progress report again if no response is received by the end of the week. She will also discuss with the solicitor the possibility of carrying out a tree survey on Minchington Rec before the transfer takes place.

Action: Clerk

26/2298/c **Cost and quantity required of large stones for Minchington – Cllr Cole**

Cllr Cole obtained a quote from Harvey Stone for large Ham stone boulders to secure the open side of the recreation field. Based on his calculations, Harvey Stone had recommended approximately 30 boulders (around 27 tonnes in total). This option was cheaper than installing bollards; however, the Clerk reminded the Parish Council that 2–3 removable bollards would still be needed at the turning-point end to allow access for grass and tree maintenance, as well as for National Grid. Additionally, the installation of boulders would increase grass maintenance costs due to the need to strim around them. Cllr Cole noted that, based on the size of the proposed boulders, fewer stones would likely be required. By spacing them further apart, only 19 boulders would be needed instead of 30, reducing both the number of lorry deliveries and the overall cost.

During the discussion, the Clerk proposed an alternative approach: planting mature cherry trees, similar to those already in the recreation field, instead of boulders or bollards. This would create a natural barrier to prevent unauthorised vehicular access, while 2–3 removable bollards would still be necessary at the turning area for maintenance access.

The Parish Council agreed to hold a site visit within the next couple of weeks to consider the options: boulders, a combination of alternating boulders and trees, or trees alone. The Clerk will arrange a date suitable for all attendees. The Chair also suggested this could be an opportunity for residents to contribute by sponsoring a tree.

Action: Clerk

26/2298/d **Sign off budget and agree precept for 2026-27**

The Chair reviewed the financial requirements for the 2026–27 financial year, which had been discussed at previous meetings. The Clerk reiterated that the proposed increase in the precept was required not only to meet existing expenditure but also to provide funding for Minchington Rec, Barn Orchard Green, election costs, and other statutory and discretionary services delivered by the Parish Council. Members also noted the continued support for the Hamdon Youth Group and the introduction of an annual grant to the Village Hall, recognising it as an important asset to the village.

The Clerk reported receipt of the tax base figures from Somerset Council. The tax base, which is set annually by the billing authority, represents the equivalent number of Band D properties in the parish after the appropriate adjustments.

The Clerk/RFO presented the financial implications of both an 18% and a 20% increase in the precept across each council tax band. Members gave the matter detailed consideration, emphasising that the precept is set with due care and diligence to ensure sufficient funds are available to maintain parish facilities while minimising the financial impact on residents.

Following this detailed review, the budget for the 2026–27 financial year was agreed and formally approved.

The Clerk would include a detailed council tax band breakdown—showing the number of properties in each band in the Parish Council newsletter.

Housing Band	Number of dwellings per band	2025-26 cost per week	2026-27 cost per week	Increase per week	Total cost per year 26-27
A	8	£2.32	2.71	0.39	140.75
B	62	£2.71	3.16	0.45	164.21
C	71	£3.09	3.61	0.52	187.67
D	43	£3.48	4.06	0.58	211.12
E	72	£4.25	4.96	0.71	258.04
F	60	£5.02	5.86	0.84	304.96
G	28	£5.80	6.77	0.97	351.87
H	3	£6.96	8.12	1.16	422.25
Total no. of dwellings	347				

It was unanimously resolved that the precept be increased by 18%.
The precept for 2026–27 will be £71,685.00.

Proposed: Cllr. More

Seconded: Cllr. Cole

Agreed unanimously.

26/2298/e Allotment Footpath – any update from Bagnell?

The Chair reported that she had not seen anyone from Bagnell Farm to discuss the footpath redirection. but would speak to them and report back.

Action: Chairman, Cllr More

26/2299 PLANNING:

26/2299a Matters For Report

Nothing to report

26/2299/b Decisions Notified:

Nothing to report

26/2299/c Applications for consideration

Nothing to report

26/2300 FINANCE:

26/2300/a Matters for report:

1. VAT return submitted - £1,010.25
2. End of 3rd quarter accounts

NAT WEST BANK ACCOUNTS:

Current account	£	00.00
Reserve Account	£	00.32 (Dec interest)
Total	£	00.32

UNITY TRUST BANK

Current Account	£	2,989.79
Instant Saver	£	64,346.82
TOTAL	£	67,336.61

Total in both banks £ 67,336.61

Total as cash book £ 67,336.61

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

Action: Clerk

3. Nat West Bank accounts closed Dec 25 – monies transferred to UTB account (Chair)

26/2300/b Matters for resolution

Nothing to report

26/2300/c Invoices Payable – all paid via the Unity Trust Bank

Louise Brooks	Democratic services – December 25	£	1,198.30
HMRC	Employee NI & PAYE & Employer NI to pay DEC	£	216.03
Louise Brooks	Home Office Allowance – DEC 2025 – Government set	£	26.00
Louise Brooks	December Parish Council Office supplies – Includes paper, ink and other office consumables, postage.	£	44.00
PATA	Payroll and pension management Oct-Dec25 Inv No: 25/0531/PPS	£	47.46
Down2Earth SW Ltd	Village maintenance – inc. play area, boundary stones and drain clearance Sept-Dec 25	£	345.00
Somerset Landscapes Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Sept-Dec 25– Main Rec Inv No: SLL36440	£	493.30
SLCC (Society of Local Council clerks)	Annual membership	£	126.50
Somerset Council	Operational Playground Inspections for the financial year 2025/26	£	130.37

Proposed: Cllr. Reid

Seconded: Cllr. Gartrell

Agreed unanimously

26/2301 VILLAGE HALL:

Nothing to report

26/2302 RECREATION GROUND:

Bollard

The Clerk explained that she is awaiting a response from another company and advice on the most suitable type of bollard for the recreation field gate. The bollard can be installed at a later date, so its decision will not delay the fencing installation. The fencing is expected to be installed within the next couple of weeks, subject to weather conditions.

26/2303 CORRESPONDENCE:

All correspondence received has been circulated to all Parish Councillors.

26/2304 FOOTPATHS:

Cllr Riley reported that the wire fence along the footpath from Highwoods down to Skinners Lane continues to be a concern, as well as the path being muddy and slippery. The clerk noted that she had reported the issue on the Footpaths website, which has since been updated to indicate that the fence had been repaired. Both the Chair and the clerk recently walked the route and observed that the wire appears to have been reinstated through the concrete posts. The Chair said she would walk the path again to check.

Action: Chair

26/2305 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Nothing to report

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.30 pm in the village hall committee room.