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

26/2396 PRESENT:

Cllr. S More (Chairman), Cllr. B. Matraves (Vice-Chair), Cllr. J Harris, Cllr R Reid, Cllr. C Riley, Cllr. P Gartrell, Mike Hewitson (Somerset Councillor) and Mrs. L. Brooks (Clerk). There were 2 members of the public present.

26/2397 APOLOGIES:

Cllr. J Cole

26/2398 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report

26/2399 PUBLIC TIME

26/2399/a Public Time

A member of the public asked whether the roadside hedge bordering Minchington Recreation Ground had been scheduled for cutting this year, as responsibility for its maintenance had transferred to the Parish Council. The Chair confirmed that the hedge was on the list for flailing this autumn. **Action: Clerk** - to confirm that the hedge is included on the contractor's list of works.

26/2399/b P.C.S.O. Report:

The Clerk reported that the PCSO had spoken to the member of the public whose dog had been bitten and asked whether he wished to press charges. He had declined to do so. The PCSO would add the incident to the existing file.

26/2399/c Somerset Councillor report:

Cllr Hewitson attended the meeting and provided the following updates:

A new tiered tariff structure for Somerset Council car parks is proposed to promote greater consistency in parking charges across the county. A 10% increase in charges at all currently chargeable Somerset Council car parks is due to take effect in January 2027.

Cllr Hewitson advised that 90% of Somerset Council's historic Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) deficit is expected to be written off by central government. Responsibility for funding SEND provision is also expected to transfer to central government within the next two years.

The Octagon Refresh programme is progressing to the tender stage, with contractors being sought for the next phase of planned works.

Cllr Hewitson reported that he had met with James Duvall of Somerset Council to discuss highways concerns relating to the increase in traffic at Ham Hill. Stoke-sub-Hamdon and Odcombe Parish Councils had also raised concerns about the increased traffic. Despite attempts by James Duvall to obtain responses from the Highways team, no answers had yet been received. A meeting with the relevant portfolio holder is to be arranged to discuss the matter further.

It was noted that visitor footfall at Ham Hill had decreased. The Chair advised that the road at Ham Hill was due to be resurfaced.

Cllr Hewitson was asked to check whether the plastic recycling bin had been removed from Crewkerne recycling centre.

Cllr Hewitson reported that he was in discussions with Chiselborough, West and Middle Chinnock Parish Councils regarding speed limits through their villages. The estimated cost of implementing changes, ranged from £7,500 to £15,000, which was considered prohibitive. It was also noted that the proposed changes would not necessarily receive the required endorsement. Speed bumps were not considered an option, as Highways no longer installs them.

Cllr Hewitson was asked about the proposed planning changes. The Parish Council expressed its disappointment that, after three years of objecting to the Highwoods planning application, permission had been granted shortly after delegated decision-making powers were introduced.

Members expressed concern that parish councils' role as consultees was being undermined and that local knowledge and representations were not being given sufficient consideration by Somerset Council. The Parish Council questioned the value of consultation if local concerns were not reflected in planning decisions and expressed concern about the potential impact on villages and their character.

Cllr Hewitson expressed his agreement with the Parish Council's concerns.

26/2399/d CLT Update:
Nothing to report
26/2399/e HYG Report
Cllr Riley reported that the AGM had taken place, although attendance was poor, with only three people present and no parents of children attending the group in attendance. The committee will provide a report to the Parish Council in November. It was noted that attendance currently averages 17 children per meeting.
26/2399/f Allotment Report:
Nothing to report.
26/2399/g Bus Service Report
Nothing to report
26/2400 MINUTES
The Minutes from the September meeting were circulated. They were approved and signed.
Proposed: Cllr. Matraves Seconded: Cllr. Reid Agreed unanimously.
26/2401 MATTERS ARISING
a) **26/2401/a** Minchington Rec – tree removal quote, annual play equipment check due.
The Clerk reported that the tree identified for removal required felling. The quotation of £675 from Parsons Tree Surgeons was approved by the Parish Council. Clerk to instruct Jacob Parsons to proceed with the work. **Action: Clerk**
Proposed: Cllr. Reid Seconded: Cllr. Matraves Agreed unanimously.
The Clerk reported that a quotation had been requested from The Play Inspection Company for the annual inspection of Minchington Recreation Ground. The Clerk also reported that she had queried the quarterly playground safety inspection report provided by Somerset Council, as the most recent report did not appear to reflect the recently installed swings and safety surface. She would update the Parish Council when she had a response.
b) **26/2401/b** New Road Rec – dead wooding quote, replacement trees: horse chestnuts & Cllr Biddle's tree. Annual play equipment report.
The Clerk reported on the quotation of £550.00 for dead-wooding trees in the Main Recreation Ground. As many of the trees are situated alongside footpaths, the work was considered necessary for public safety. The quotation was unanimously approved.
Proposed: Cllr. Matraves Seconded: Cllr. Gartrell Agreed unanimously.
The Clerk reported that three Horse Chestnut trees had been promised for the Recreation Ground to replace the diseased trees removed earlier in the year. One tree had been offered by Norton Community Matters, one by Norton and Chiselborough Flower Show, and one donated by a friend of Cllr Gartrell. The Clerk would liaise with Down2Earth regarding the supply and planting arrangements. Separate invoices would be issued to Norton Community Matters and the Flower Show Committee, who would pay the Down2Earth directly. The Parish Council would cover the planting and support costs for the donated tree. The Clerk also reported that a Cox's Orange Pippin apple tree needed to be purchased and planted to replace the tree planted in memory of Cllr Prue Biddle, which had been lost. The Clerk would liaise with Down2Earth to arrange the purchase and planting of the replacement tree at the same time as the horse chestnut trees. **Action: Clerk**
c) **26/2401/c** Food van visits to Norton. Feedback plus Monday November 2nd visit from A Slice of Salerno Pizza
The Clerk reported that Somerset Catch's visit in early October had been another sell-out, with positive feedback from residents thanking the Parish Council for introducing the service.
Cllr Harris reported that complaints had been received regarding the Parish Council's promotion of the food vans, including concerns about whether the Council received payment and whether other village businesses were being treated less favourably.
The Clerk clarified that the Parish Council received no payment from the food vans and promoted their monthly visits as a community service. Publicity helped ensure the visits remained viable, particularly benefiting residents with limited transport. The village shop, Village Hall, Reading Room and Lord Nelson promoted their own services and events, and the Parish Council had also shared information supporting the pub and the wider hospitality sector.

26/2402 PLANNING:

26/2402/a Matters For Report

Nothing to report

26/2402/b Decisions Notified:

Planning Application 23/02859/OUT – The Stables, Land Behind Highwoods, North Street, Norton-sub-Hamdon

The Clerk reported that Somerset Council had approved the outline planning application for up to five dwellings, with all matters reserved except access.

The Parish Council expressed its disappointment at the decision, having objected to the application on planning grounds since 2023. Objections included concerns regarding surface water drainage, access visibility, pedestrian safety due to the absence of a footpath, and the capacity of the local drainage infrastructure, particularly in light of existing flooding issues in the village centre. The Parish Council had also requested that at least two bungalows be provided to help address privacy concerns affecting properties in Highwoods Close. The Parish Council expressed concern that its local knowledge and planning objections had not been given sufficient weight in the decision.

Somerset Council had afforded significant weight to the provision of new housing due to its inability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The application was approved under the Council's scheme of delegation, with housing delivery in accordance with Policy S4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) being a key consideration.

26/2402/c Applications for consideration

Nothing to report

26/2403 FINANCE:

26/2403/a Matters for report:

End of 2nd quarter accounts (July-Sept)

UNITY TRUST BANK	
Current Account	£ 5,592.76
Instant Saver	£ 93,046.11
TOTAL IN BOTH BANKS	**£ 98,638.87**
Total as cash book	**£ 98,638.87**

The Clerk reported the second-quarter receipts as follows:

- Second precept payment of £35,842.50 received from Somerset Council on 4 September.
- Second interest payment of £341.16 received from UTB on 30 September.

The Clerk noted that, although the overall bank balance stood at £98,638.87, approximately £35,000 was ring-fenced for highways issues, election costs and future replacement play equipment at both recreation grounds. These earmarked reserves would need to be built up annually to ensure sufficient funds were available when required.

The Clerk reported that the accounts would now be submitted to the Internal Auditor for the quarterly audit. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the 2026 edition of the Clerks' Manual was available at a cost of £43.80 plus postage. It was agreed that the cost would be shared equally between Norton-sub-Hamdon Parish Council and Hambridge and Westport Parish Council. Both Councils agreed to this arrangement. **Action: The Clerk to order the manual**

26/2403/b Matters for resolution

26/2403/c Invoices Payable – all paid via the Unity Trust Bank

October Payments made:

Louise Brooks	Democratic services – September26 (plus National Gov pay rise – backdated to April 2026)	£	1,397.21
HMRC	HMRC Employee NI & PAYE & Employer NI to pay September 26	£	342.19
Louise Brooks	Home Office Allowance – September 2026 – Government set	£	26.00
Louise Brooks	September Parish Council Office supplies – Includes paper, ink and other office consumables, postage.	£	44.00
PATA	Inv no 26/0219/PPS July-Sept payroll and pension management	£	66.30
PLAY INPSECTION COMPANY LTD	INV 89683 MAIN REC – Annual Play equipment inspection	£	118.80
DOWN2EARTH SW LTD	General Maintenance Inc Play Area & Boundary Stones July-Sept	£	362.25
SOMERSET LANDSCAPES	MAIN REC – July-Sept – grass maintenance inv no SLL37194	£	399.86
SOMERSET LANDSCAPES	MINCHINGTON REC -July-Sept – grass maintenance inv no:	£	683.42

SOMERSET LANDSCAPES	BARN ORCHARD – July - Sept maintenance of The Green Inv no:	£	106.20
PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP	EXTERNAL AUDIT	£	378.00
HAMDON CONSTRUCTION LTD	EMERGENCY REPAIRS TO BUS SHELTER INV NO; 0247	£	78.00
SOMERSET COUNCIL	2ND QUARTER OF BIN EMTPTYING July – Sept INV NO 32035780	£	507.00
SLCC	The Clerk's Manual 2026 (cost shared with Hambridge Parish Council)	£	24.60

Proposed: Cllr. Matraves Seconded: Cllr. Reid Agreed unanimously

26/2404 VILLAGE HALL:

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Cllr Cole before the meeting regarding a potential mulled wine fundraiser to coincide with the fish and chip van visit on Monday 7 December. Cllr Cole advised that carol singers would need to be included to meet the financial criteria for the event to qualify as a fundraiser.

Cllr Harris confirmed that the Village Hall Committee would discuss the proposal at its next meeting, with Cllr Cole to update the Parish Council following the discussion. **Action: Cllr Cole**

26/2405 RECREATION GROUND:

Nothing to report.

26/2406 CORRESPONDENCE:

All correspondence received has been circulated to all Parish Councillors.

26/2407 FOOTPATHS:

Cllr Reid reported on the poor state of the footpath near Highwoods House. This is privately owned land and therefore landowners' responsibility. A reminder will be added to the newsletter article about keeping footpaths on private land passable.

26/2408 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Nothing to report

The meeting finished at 8.20pm

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