



HENSTRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES

Henstridge Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall, Ash Walk, Henstridge on Tuesday 4TH November 2025 at 7.00pm.

The Open meeting commenced at 7pm The Open meeting commenced at 7pm and the Chair welcomed members of the electorate of the Parish to speak. The sole subject was the purchase of the Bird in Hand Public House by the Bird Society. Members of the Society provided an update of the campaign, details of which are in the Winter edition of the Wots On Henstridge magazine.

The Chair closed the Open meeting at 7.14pm

The Chair opened the PC meeting at 7.15pm.

- 1. Present:** Cllr Smith, Cllr Steel, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Petheram, Cllr Rose, Cllr Gaymer, Cllr Scard, Cllr Graham, Cllr Courtenay, Cllr Finch.
- 2. In attendance:** Cllr Hayward (until 8pm), Ann Lee Parish Clerk
- 3. Apologies for Absence.** To receive and approve apologies for absence including reasons given (Local Government Act 1972 s85 (1)). **Cllr Clark attending another PC meeting, Brigadier John Smales noted no Parochial business on the agenda.**
- 4. Declarations of Interest.** (Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any Pecuniary or Other interests they may have under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct). **The Clerk received written requests for dispensation from the following Cllrs: Cllr Smith, Cllr Steel, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Gaymer, Cllr Scard, Cllr Graham, Cllr Courtenay, Cllr Finch.** The requests related to agenda item 8e in which the Cllrs had a declarable interest due to the purchase of shares and membership of the Bird Society.

The Clerk noted that without the granting of a dispensation, the number of Cllrs prohibited from participating would impede the transaction of business and prevent the Council from making an effective decision. Cllrs also noted that the interests declared were shared by a significant proportion of the community and that allowing participation would be in the public interest.

Resolved: Dispensations were granted to all Cllrs with written requests so allowing them to participate, speak and vote on item 8e. The dispensation was granted under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 on the grounds that:

1. Without the dispensation the meeting would be inquorate/the business could not be fairly and effectively conducted; and/or
2. The interest is common to a significant number of electors.
3. Granting the dispensation is in the public interest.

The dispensation will apply solely to the discussion and vote on item 8e and financial matters relating to the Bird in Hand for the duration of 18 months. This decision was carried unanimously.

5. The Chair proceeded to use her discretionary powers to bring item 8b forward on the agenda relating to budget planning provision:-

To **NOTE** recommendations for the 2026-27 budget for the RFO in preparation for budget projections and decisions on priorities for the PC meeting in December.

Cllrs made the following observations: -

- To note a request for additional Youth activity hours at a cost of £10k per annum and the need for a proposal detailing the nature of this request for consideration on the 2nd December PC meeting.
- The recommendation from Open Spaces to address the need for work in the cemetery to mark and records graves, provide for an accurate to scale plan of all graves and those purchased; to make sure annual burial spoil is removed and ant hill clearance undertaken to improve maintenance. Cost estimated at £5,000
- To make provision to provide for anticipated inflationary increases for the PC's insurance, subscriptions and membership fees, maintenance services and waste collections, salaries and anticipated contractor fee charges
- To recommended revision to the title of the reserves for the New Village Hall and Car park by removing the term "new".
- To seek the purpose and scope of all allocated reserves and make recommendations for refinement/revision/reallocation if required to minimise the precept lift and protect the PCs obligations regarding recommended protection of running costs.
- To understand the scope of the PCs capacity to legally allocate grants from funds generated from the precept in respect of legal capping limitations.
- To protect the annual play day for families in the summer holidays.
- To make provision for the anticipated expenditure of £2000 for drainage work in Oak Vale Wood.

Councillors discussed requests and recommendations regarding youth activity funding, cemetery maintenance, inflationary provisions, and reserve allocations. They considered legalities around grant allocation, protection of the annual play day, and funding for Oak Vale Wood. It was noted that each £10,000 increase in the precept would raise Band D household contributions by £14.32, with recognition of the financial strain on Somerset Council and potential impacts on the Parish Council.

Cllrs agreed to meet with the RFO before December's PC meeting to better understand financial pressures and to establish if reserves can support priorities for the coming fiscal year. Clerk to arrange RFO availability and ask Cllrs Courtenay, Howlett, Graham, Finch, Steel, and Smith for their availability.

6. The Chair proceeded to use her discretionary powers to bring item 8e relating to matters forward in proceedings relating to the Bird in Hand public house.

To **Approve** a proposal to support the purchase of the Bird in Hand in recognition that it is a community asset by purchasing shares **Cllr Howlett**.

Cllrs discussed the proposal brought before them but felt that they needed further information before deciding. Cllrs asked for: -

- Further information on the extent and limits of their GPoC.
- Independent advice of the robustness of the business plan
- Information about the extent they would need to consult residents

- A deeper understanding about the concerns raised by the RFO
- Whether the PC could afford this request as the amount of risk is a material consideration
- Alternative financial options to offer support.

Cllrs resolved to defer the proposal until the next meeting for further exploration.

7. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Parish meeting, held on the 7th of October 2025.** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12) **The minutes were proposed as accurate by Cllr Howlett and seconded by Cllr Petherham, unanimously carried.**
8. **To note the content of the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee held on the 21 October 2025.** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12) **Cllrs collectively noted the content.**
9. **To note the Actions from the 7th October 2025 meeting and discuss any outstanding matters arising.**

6/12/22 9g	Oak Vale Wood flood prevention: Cllr Thompson has provided all previous company details to the Clerk. Cllr Finch is in the process of re contacting contractors who have previously tendered. Action Cllr Finch to contact companies who have previously quoted to establish if they have capacity to undertake the work and report at the PC meeting in December.	On Going Cllr Thompson/Finch
1/3/23 8f:	Oak Vale Wood To RECIEVE 3 quotes for gates & signage in Oak Vale Wood once work at Vale Wood is completed.	On Going Cllr Thompson on completion of drainage work
7/10/25	Allotment Action: To REPORT on amendments made to the contact list and detail fees owing and supply the RFO with this information for invoicing fees due. RFO to invoice tenants. Oversight of expenditure to rest with the Open Spaces Committee with reports from the Committee Chair (Cllr Scard). An extension to grant provision has been given by the grant making body until June 2026. Action Cllr Scard to meet up with Richard Jones before the next PC meeting to establish progress.	Clerk/RFO Complete Ongoing Cllr Scard
3.12.24 9c	To formally COMPLAIN to Somerset Council about their decision regarding 23/01470/OUT and allocating £40k to the golf club to provide commercial changing rooms and play group facilities several miles away from the community. The PC resolved to wait for reserve matters to materialise.	Cllr Petheram On going
3.12.24 11f	To arrange a small plaque for the cemetery wall indicating where three original graves were located within parish. Action: Cllr Scard to provide Cllr Steel with details of deceased for the plaque and a quote for work.	Cllr Scard/Cllr Steel On going

2.9.25 5a	To request local intelligence concerning burglaries or other police matters that are not detailed in the reports. Action: Cllr Smith to write to the Chief Constable to request this data.	Cllr Smith Complete No response to letter
7.10.25 10	To provide feedback on the recruitment plan for 2 Cllrs. Vacancy advert continues to facilitate co-option. Advert extended to January 2026 band added advert to WOT's on winter copy and publish on social media.	Clerk Ongoing
7.10.25 6f g	To follow up potential breaches in planning to land in the Parish registered as a tyre business trading as Sparewheels R us Ltd and Mobile Tyres Ltd on the Stalbridge Road. Address The Pantiles, Henstridge, Templecombe, BA8 0SA and Mrytle Cottage with newly appointed direct access for vehicles onto the A30.	Clerk ongoing. Awaiting response from Somerset Council. Cllr hayward aware

10. Reports

- a) To **RECEIVE** any Police matters **Cllr Smith**. Cllr Smith reported that reports received from the Police were not relevant to this locality. She still awaits a response from the Chief Constable.
- b) To **RECEIVE** County reports from **Cllr Hayward Burt and Cllr Nicola Clark**. **The Chair thanked Cllr Burt in his absence for his report.**
- c) To **RECEIVE** Youth Report Q2 Cllr **Rose**. **The content of the report was noted specifically mentioning that there are now 83 young people registered with a total of 219 attendances for Q2 aged 11 – 19 years of age.**

11. Planning

- a) To **RECEIVE** an update on **Application no. 25/00410/COL for a third application for a Lawful Use or Development Certificate** for an existing development relating to the commencement of works 17/03029/out and reserved matters approval ref. 21/03369/rem at Land Os 5439 Part Townsend Green Henstridge Templecombe Somerset BA8 0RG. **AND To RECEIVE notification on Application 23/01470/OUT** that Somerset Council has granted planning permission for 52 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure and open space at Townsend Farm and S106 funding proposal. **Cllr Petheram**.

Cllr Petheram explained that a third JR is now in progress. It appears that Somerset Council's approval for 52 homes at Townsend Farm was unexpectedly signed off, despite a clear prior commitment from the Head of Legal Services not to do so before the related Judicial Review (JR) proceedings concluded. This has led to a third JR (JR3) being initiated, with confidence that it will be conceded and costs recovered, due to an apparent legal error on the Council's part. In parallel, a second JR (JR2) is underway regarding the 130-home Barratt/David Wilson Homes site at Townsend Green, following the Council's issue of a third certificate of lawfulness. Both cases are ongoing, with court dates pending, and parish support is encouraged given the implications for local road safety.

- b) To **RECEIVE** further updates on the Enhanced Highways Pilot update anticipated in an expected report at the end of September 2025. **Cllr Gaymer**. **Cllr Gaymer stated that the report has not yet been published and will advise Cllrs of the content once received.**
- c) To **CONSIDER** any new Planning Applications:

Application	Proposal	Applicant details	Deadline
25/02316/FUL	Construction of a Dung Storage Shed	Mr Richard Hunt Location: Elm Farm Common Lane Yenston Templecombe Somerset BA8 0NB	6 November 25
The PC have no objections to the application. Proposed by Cllr Scard, seconded by Cllr Courtenay, unanimously carried.			

d) To **NOTE SSDC Planning Decisions:** The following applications were noted:-

Application number	Proposal	Applicant details	Decision
TrafficManagement@somerset.gov.uk	Derestiction sign Combe Hill, Templecombe extension of the 30mph zone from the southern edge of Templecombe to the traffic lights at the top of Yenston Hill.	Templecombe request for support	Awaiting decision
24/01861/FUL Validated 17.1.25	Creation of a slurry lagoon in an existing pasture with additional areas for wild-flowers and pond to allow for BNG	Location: Cherry Bolberry Farm Furge Lane BA8 0RN	Awaiting decision
25/00171/FUL Validated 24.1.25	Erection of a new workshop/storage building Location: Land At Henstridge Airfield, The Marsh Camp Road	Hookins	Awaiting decision

12. Finance

To **APPROVE** the payment schedule for payment in November. **RFO Cllr Courtney proposed the payments. Cllrs resolved not to pay item 4. Cllr Graham proposed the remaining items, seconded by Cllr Gaymer. This was unanimously carried. Cllr Howlett to authorise.**

November 25 Payment Schedule			
	PAYEE	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT
1	Timeback Accounts	Payroll Oct25 - INV tbc	£ 18.00
2	Henstridge Village Hall	Hall Hire HVH- INV tbc	£ 16.00
3	Somerset Landscapes Ltd	Ranger Service INV 36059 & tbc	£ 1,092.96
4	Parish Online	Annual Subscription 25-26	£ 118.80
5	Stalbridge Building Supplies	Wood protector & bin bags	£ 129.24
6	SES	Annual maintenance 25-26	£ 195.60
PAYMENTS FOR REPORT			
	Staff	Salaries and Expenses	£ 2,984.80
	Mr T Pulling	Ground Maintenance	£ 111.93
	Hopkins Industries	Cemetery Work	£ 360.00
	TOTAL PAYMENTS		£ 5,027.33

a) To **NOTE** receipts. Cllrs noted the receipts

Sept 25 Receipts for Report			
	RECEIVED	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT
1	UTB	Q2 Interest	£ 939.49
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		£ 939.49

b) To **NOTE** the content of the S3 audit report with a statement to expressly detail the variance in staffing and salaries **Action RFO. Cllrs noted the content of the documents shared by the RFO.**

c) To **RECEIVE** and approve the financial internal controls policy following amendments made since last meeting **RFO. The financial Internal Control amendments were proposed by Cllr Courtenay, seconded by Cllr Steel and unanimously approved.**

d) To **NOTE** any further expenditure from the allotment, grant £3,040 and £2,500 from restricted reserves and receive an update of progress with

tenants' application to become a member of the Allotment Association.

Deferred from the last meeting. **Cllr Scard. Cllr Scard reported that he is in the process of arranging a meeting with Richard Jones and will be accompanied by the Clerk and will report back at the December meeting.**

- e) To **AGREE** a recommended quote from **Open Spaces** to address the Ash Die Back work required in Oak Vale Woods. **Cllr Steel. Cllrs resolved to include this in the recommendations for the forth coming budget decisions.**
- f) To **AGREE** a quote for a new contractor to complete the work at Oak vale Wood. **Cllr Thompson Cllrs resolved to defer this decision until all opportunities had been given to companies to resubmit their quotes and provide insurance details if they are still interested in undertaking the work. Action Cllr Finch**
- g) To **AGREE** to renew the maintenance/service cover for the coming year for the CCTV system **£163.80 Cllr Smith. This was proposed by Cllr Gaymer and seconded by Cllr Scard and unanimously carried.**
- h) To **AGREE** to add Toomer and AR Landscapes to a preferred provider list. **Cllr Scard. Cllrs resolved to write a preferred provider policy before agreeing to subscribe companies to a list. Action Clerk**
- i) To **AGREE** the recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee to support the clearance of overgrowth to pathways using reserve provision from the already allocated £2,500 budget Footpath issues largely relate to overgrowth blocking the following paths: 12/28, 12/39, 12/33, 12/27, 12/38, 12/9, and flooding issues on pathway 12,46. **Cllr Scard. Cllrs resolved to see if the work can be accommodated into the hours allocated to the Ranger. Action Cllr Steel.**
- j) To **AGREE** the recommendation from Open Spaces to budget for burial ground mapping, to scale and mark plots reserved and free to maximise the capacity of the cemetery and procure a software package to support record keeping. **Cllrs Finch Cllrs resolved to include this in proposals for budget planning**
- k) To **AGREE** the recommendation from Open Spaces to budget for the remove of ant hills on top of graves in the cemetery enhancing the ease of groundwork maintenance and the aesthetics of the site. **Cllr Smith. Cllrs resolved to include this in proposals for budget planning.**
- l) To **AGREE** the recommended quote from Paul Pauley to rectify drainage works at the Village Hall carpark to mitigate health and safety concerns in wet and freezing conditions at a cost of £3,532.20 plus VAT Cllr Graham. **Proposed by Cllr Gaymer, seconded by Cllr and unanimously carried.**

- m) To **AGREE** to purchase an additional SID Cllr Gaymer Cllrs resolved to explore this further in light of the concerns raised with safety across the parish.

9 Council Matters

- a) To **RECEIVE** feedback on the 15 October LCN meeting. **Cllr Courtenay. Cllr Courtenay stated that the minutes has not yet been received.**
- b) To **AGREE** the scheme of work recommended in the playground inspection. **Cllr Graham and Cllr Finch referred to Open Spaces Committee. Cllrs resolved to delegate this to the Open Spaces Committee.**
- c) To **AGREE** the agenda items for the next meeting. **Cllr Smith**

Date of the Next meetings – The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday 2nd December 2025 and Tuesday 13th January 2026**. All items for inclusion on the agenda and all items to be listed under issues arising from previous meetings must be received by the Clerk by **9.00am on 22 November 25 and 28 December 25** respectfully.

Ann Lee Parish Clerk