



HENSTRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Ann Lee, 3 Sparkford Road, Sparkford, Yeovil, BA22 7FA

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**The Henstridge Annual Parish meeting will be held on
Wednesday 14 May 2025**

Tea and Coffee were served from 6.30

The meeting started at 7.00pm

Henstridge Annual Parish Meeting Agenda

1. **Welcome from the Chair:-** Cllr Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the WI members for their hospitality and the Village Hall Committee for the use of the facilities.
2. **In attendance:-** Cllr Smith, Cllr Steel, Cllr Scard, Cllr Gaymer, Cllr Courtenay, Cllr Graham, Cllr Petheram, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Finch, 58 residents. Cllr Hayward.
3. **Apologies.** Cllr Thompson, Cllr Rose, PSCO Amanda Ware
4. **To approve the minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting held in 2024** The minutes were approved by a show of hands from those present.
5. **Parish Council Chair's report.**

Cllr Smith extended her welcome to everyone present at the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting and thanked all those representing local organisations for their commitment to this community.

She explained that for those who had not attended this event before, this meeting was not the AGM of the Parish Council and should not be confused with the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, which was recently held on 6 May. The Annual Parish meeting is required to comply with the Local Government Act 1972 and is not a Parish Council meeting but an event hosted by the Chair of the Parish Council and an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the contribution that all groups make to enrich the experiences for those living within the Parish of Henstridge and Yenston.

Cllr Smith stated that it has been a great privilege and honour to preside as Chairperson for Henstridge Parish Council over the last year and she acknowledged her gratitude to all Cllrs who volunteer and serve this community. In particular, she two Cllrs (Tony Coles and Elsbeth Graham) who, for personal reasons resigned during the last year after many years of dedicated service and office – we miss their contribution greatly. Cllr Smith announced that in April we had had the pleasure to welcome Fiona Shea as a co-opted Cllr, explaining that we still have one vacancy. Currently there are 12 active Cllrs. She explained that as ever, the year has not been without challenges, and she thank members of the Parish Council for their unwavering support, dedicated commitment, and enthusiasm stated that their contribution has been exemplary throughout the year. She explained that this would not have been possible without the diverse skills afforded by everyone who support the community and wider work of the Council across the community. The PC would particularly like to respectfully



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acknowledge all the work that Frazer Cooke and Linda Jones quietly undertake for the benefit of parishioners as footpath and dog wardens. She also thanked Cllr Burt and Cllr Hayward for their support in navigating the impact of council cuts and redundancies on planning matters, environmental health and maintenance.

And in addition, she thanked all volunteers for their time to keep the Parish looking attractive and well kept, either litter picking, maintaining verges, planting bulbs or taking time creatively running events ; campaigning to maintain services or dedicating their hours of personal care and support for others to avoid social isolation, as well as those making time for younger people in an attempt to combat unsocial behaviour and teach life skills, energising and promoting their wellbeing.

3.Our Staff. Cllr Smith congratulated the maintenance and groundsmen who have worked tirelessly to maintain the recreation area, our precious open spaces, playground, skate park, church yard, memorial site and parish cemetery keeping them all in good order despite the inclement wet winter weather that we have experienced. She went on to thank Ann Lee Parish Clerk and Julie for all their hard work behind the scenes.

4. Events since last year

The Unitary Council Financial Crisis: Cllr Smith stated that Unitary Councils financial circumstances were serious last year, and since then Cllrs have learnt that significant redundancies have occurred forcing the reorganisation of their workforce to save £34m on their pay bill. The new Council structure went live on the 1st April 2025 and Somerset Council announced the loss of 194 posts from their voluntary redundancy scheme. The new leadership team has been reduced from 22 to 16 posts. A staggering 555 full time equivalent posts went and roles were redistributed so that employees who remained had to take on multiple areas of responsibility. She stated that face to face contact with council staff would become a thing of the past, that building were unoccupied with many staff working remotely. Inevitably the impact of such large reductions will mean delays in responses for assistance for us all here locally. She reported that Cllr Nicola Clark and Cllr Burt have been extremely supportive and where we have experienced delays, they have been able to tease out information and seek solutions to perceived hold ups on our behalf as well as ensuring our voice is heard in the Chamber.

Financial position for the Parish Council: Cllr Smith reported that the Parish Council are thankfully in a healthy position and met last year's budget. She advised those present that the PC had received the Precept with a value of over £80K.

Local Community Network South East Cllr Ken Coutenay has consistently attended these meetings where Cllrs across the area share parish council issues that impact on all communities. The last meeting was held here in Henstridge.

Number of Planning Applications: 36 planning applications have been considered over the year including tree applications. The remaining



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outstanding concern is the Barratt development on the southern end of the village for 130 new homes and the problem this imposes to pedestrian safety in the High Street. This has been consistently opposed by the Parish Council since 2018. We will learn tonight how the judicial review application is progressing. Out thanks as a community go to CLASH and Paul Diminsky and his team who are leading this independently from the Parish Council.

In addition, the PC has vehemently opposed the Slurry Lagoon at Cherry Bolberry Farm, Henstridge. The Parish Council has written to indicate that residents of the parish were not given the opportunity to comment on this application 24/01861/FUL. It seems that Planning Notices were not conspicuous and consequently did not provide notice or advise local residents of the application. The Parish Council were not aware of this. Residents report that the slurry pit is only 100 metres from residents homes and will cause significant impact not only to them but the entire village. There appears to have been no engagement with the Environmental Agency as requested in the PCs response to the Officers and there is no report in the public domain. The PC continued support of Cllr Clark and Cllr Burt has been invaluable. Cllrs noted their disappointment in this administrative failure and agreed to advise Cllr Burt and Cllr Clark and will continue to seek their support to oppose this application.

Open Spaces: Cllr Steel The Parish Council has entered the Southwest in Bloom Competition: The Parish will enjoy the benefit of the Southwest in Bloom Competition this year. Cllr Steel will speak about this tonight as well as further planting in the Jubilee Border

Allotment. Cllr Howlett We have been pleased to attain a grant for £3,040 to enhance the experience for our allotment tenants. We are equally delighted that they are seeking membership of the National Allotment Society which will afford tenants further benefits.

Parish Cemetery Cllr Scard Provision has been made to ensure grass cutting in the cemetery is now regularly attended to. Prices for grave slots have not increased and priority is given to residents and families living or with a link to the Parish.

Oak Vale wood scheme of work: Cllr Scard reported that work commences in full in September to rectify the risk of flooding. Volunteers have worked hard to clear routes to the ditch and replant samplings. Cllr Thompson is leading this initiative.

Football Cllr Graham:

The PC are pleased to host the Gryphon football club on the recreation ground. We are delighted that they will come for another season.

Youth Work: In Cllr Roses absence, Cllr Smith reported that the Youth Club continues to benefit from a regular group of young attendees who enjoy the opportunity to socialise with their peers and interact positively with staff. A total of 54 young people enjoy this experience. In recent weeks, several new



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members have joined, further enriching the group dynamic. The hall remains a valuable asset, with the young people making full use of the space and facilities available. Our thanks go to Jayne Lewis and Cllr Rose as Youth representative.

Future activity: Cllr Smith concluded by stating that the Parish Council will be:

- Supporting the team facilitating the Village Fete on June the 21st 2015 at the recreation ground and have provided a further grant for this purpose
- Continuing to work in close partnership with the PCC
- Make provision to protect the Website from cyber-attack and work to create Community pages.
- Serve the community to improve the quality of life for all residents

6. **Open Spaces Committee**

Emergency access to the recreation ground- John Graham reported that access will be made to ensure emergency vehicles can access the site at all times. Yellow hatching will be painted adjacent to the village Hall and a gate instated with skimming to level off the drop.

Pump Track repairs- John Graham reported that the pump track repairs will be made before the village Fete takes place. Remedial work to patch and make safe is the priority.

7. **CLASH Paul Diminsky An outline of the progress with the judicial review was described.**

8. **Consultation including:**

20mph speed limit across the Parish Cllr Adrian Gaymer.

Residents present collectively asked the PC to pursue a 20mph speed limit across the entire village.

Neighbourhood Plan – Debbie Petheram Cllr Petheram outlined the difference between a Neighbourhood plan and a community plan.

Emergency Planning review – Dennis Finch outlined the purpose of the Emergency plan for the community.

9. **Reports from local organisations including:**

a) Community Policing PCSO Amanda Ware – Apologies received, PCSO Ware will no longer be working in this neighbourhood as she has been called back to Yeovil.

b) The Bird in the Hand Public House Community Asset update. Zoe Godden
Zoe Godden detailed progress with the potential purchase of the Bird with the provision of shares.

c) Henstridge Village Fete Ashley Shirlin Gave a summary of all the events taking place on the day of the Village Fete.



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d) Loose Ends- written report

Every Friday morning from 10:30 until 12:00 the Loose Ends group run a coffee morning in the lounge of the village hall in Henstridge. Many of the people in this group were born in Henstridge, attended the school here, so did their children! Various people in the village take it in turns to provide cake, biscuits, tea and coffee. New faces are welcome to join us.

The group also is a big supporter of local charities. Each year we decide on our supported local charities. In the last years we have donated to the school, Explorers, the Dorset Air Ambulance, the defib project, the church and several smaller groups or individuals. As well, this group takes the lead on the Henstridge Macmillan coffee morning which takes place each year on the last Friday in September.

It's also a very mutually supportive group – some of the members have had health issues, and it's lovely to see others supporting them.

So, give us a try, come along to Loose Ends on a Friday morning, we'd love to see you.

e) Warm Room- written report

The warm room that began in November 2022 keeps going throughout 2024-25, two and a half years later. Our stalwart volunteers and kind local people that make soups enable the delivery of lunch and refreshments on every Friday afternoon. Geoff Jarvis, from the airfield, generously provided a meal each month on the last Friday. He also hosted a full Christmas Lunch for everyone at the Airfield Club House. Loose Ends have provided Tea and Coffee supplies throughout and on many occasions have left cakes to add to the table.

The Explorers staff and the young children visited to meet everyone and then returned at Christmas time, bringing Christmas cards for all and ended with several C Christmas songs.

On good weather days we take exercise around the park, and some have been seen using the exercise equipment!

Overall, we have a good core of users that come and share experiences, have a good chat and enjoy the company with lunchtime food and drinks. We hope to see a few more local people join us through the coming months

g) St Nicolas Church- written report

h) Rainbows/Brownies/guides – written report

Rainbows and Brownies meet each week during term time in the school hall. Numbers fluctuate; at the moment we have an increasing number especially of young Rainbows. The girls enjoy a balanced programme of activities and weather permitting we try to be outside at this time of year if we possibly can. We play games, sing, do craft activities and undertake challenges. Last year Brownies had a long weekend at Mendip Activity Centre as part of a county weekend. They went rock climbing, caving, did archery and learnt how to get on in a tent with others. We joined in a big campfire (the first since before Covid) and had hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows. It was great fun even though it rained almost nonstop on the Sunday. Thanks to a very generous donation from The Ann Harris Children's Fund, we were



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able to give the girls a contribution to the cost. None of these weekly activities could happen without the team of dedicated leaders who freely give of their time and energy. Between the 4 leaders we run 4 units as Templecombe Guides meet in the village and each week 1 of the Brownie leaders is the 2nd adult for Guide meetings. Two of the leaders run Wincanton District Rangers who meet in Buckhorn Weston village hall. One of the Brownie leaders is County Commissioner for Somerset, 1 is Cadbury Division Commissioner and 1 training leader across the county in First Aid . We all live out the promise we made when we joined the Guiding movement to do our best. Jane Jeans

Ronnie Smith
Henstridge Parish Council Chair