

Otterhampton Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Held on 9th October 2025 at Otterhampton Village Hall, commencing at 7pm

Present

- Cllr L Parsons (Chair)
- Cllr C Sanders (Vice Chair)
- Cllrs M Haycraft, C Bradbury, T Gardener, S Parker, D Dodge
- Mrs S Juniper (Clerk/RFO)
- Cllr M Caswell (Somerset Council) plus 5 members of the public

136/25. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

137/25. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

138/25. Public Participation (including Ward Councilor Reports)

1. Somerset Council members report – Cllr Caswell
 - a. Somerset Council have engaged a private consultant to find ways that the Council can save money, this will cost the Council approximately £20,000,000. Currently morale is low in the Council with much of the work being carried out by Officers.
 - b. The rollout of Superfast Broadband by Airband to this area, has been put on hold until possibly 2030. Local MP will follow-up in Parliament (Sir Ashley Fox).
 - c. Any issues with Fly-parking in the Parish, please let Cllr Caswell know he will raise it at the next meeting.
 - d. Bridgwater remains in gridlock with no signs of the roadworks improving soon.
2. The Council was advised by the Editor of Ottertales, that the publisher has been changed to Bridgwater College as the cost is cheaper, but quality remains good.
3. It was further brought to the attention of the Council that works to new moorings have been carried out on the village side of the Pill without permission. Vehicles have been gaining access via the Common behind the play area, resulting in some degree of damage. Debris has been left on the bank. This is Parish Council land.
4. Concern was raised by a Parishioner on behalf of others, about the closing of the village pub – The Anchor Inn. Planning consent was originally granted providing the pub remains open. (Planning Application no: 39/16/00003).
5. Disappointment was expressed by a villager who lives near Wharf Road regarding a Rowan tree which was planted too close to a Willow tree, which has possibly now died due to the poor positioning and subsequent very dry summer. She acknowledged that Cllrs have tried to water it to no avail. Her complaint was acknowledged. Additional concerns were raised regarding an area of grass along Wharf Rd, which is mown too often resulting in any wildflowers being destroyed. It was confirmed that the PC doesn't mow this area, this is carried out by SCC.
6. The PC was asked to consider putting a gravel track around the perimeter of the common area opposite the Anchor Inn for the use of the elderly and those with limited mobility. In addition, plant some trees, possibly a cement chess table/ table tennis table, benches to encourage social connection particularly after the pub and shop have closed. **Action – Clerk to contact Colin Leppard from Natural England to investigate the art of the possible.**
7. It was further suggested that to provide a further opportunity for people to meet, that the Council looks at the possibility of commercial food vans coming into the village – **Action – Clerk to investigate.**
8. Cllr Sanders reported that the EDF bus has on several occasions, taken parishioners into town but failed to provide a return journey, leaving them stranded. Cllr Caswell noted he had previously raised this issue with EDF, who responded that the bus is a courtesy service and

not a scheduled route, so cannot always be relied upon. He will raise the matter again at the next meeting with EDF.

139/25. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The corrected minutes of the meeting held on the 10th of July 2025 were approved and signed as a correct record

140/25. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2025 were approved and signed as a correct record.

141/25. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There were no matters arising.

142/25. Planning

1. To consider planning applications received.
 - a. None received
2. To note planning decisions
 - a. None made

143/25. Finance

1. The Bank Reconciliation and Budget Statement for September were circulated prior to the meeting and were APPROVED. The balance as of the 30th of September 2025 was **£78,715.85.**
 - a. Commercial Working acct - £2049.75
 - b. Deposit Acct - £43,697.31
 - c. Reserve Acct - £32,968.79
2. The following payments as per the schedule circulated were APPROVED (inclusive of VAT)
 - a. Admin expensed £13.95
 - b. Bank Fee £4.25
 - c. Cartridge Save – ink for printer £33.23
 - d. Schoolscapes – repair play park equipment £960.00
3. The following payments submitted post circulation of Agenda were also APPROVED
 - a. Otterhampton Village Hall – Hall hire from SALC fund £280.00
 - b. Greenslades – removal of weeds from play area £146.40
 - c. SALC – Training Course for Clerk £25.00
 - d. UCS Ottertales £240.00
 - e. Mike Ingram – Clearing of Brownie Copse £60.00
 - f. Wages to include HMRC payments, allowance and pension £1063.25
 - g. Plunkett Foundation £270.00
 - h. Dabro & Associates – OPPT fund £2000.00
4. Income received.
 - a. Interest received £43.44
 - b. Profit from OPRA for fireworks plus £200 contribution £918.57
5. Clerk advised Council that an error was made when payment of wages was made twice, this was refunded back into the current account the next working day.

144/25. Flooding

It was AGREED to approve the plan of action as circulated at the meeting

Cllr Maxwell left the meeting 2030

145/25. Clerks report –

1. Taken from Action List
 - a. Chair has spoken to school regarding the issues with parking.
 - b. Postal address has been changed with Lloyd's bank.

- c. Support on Facebook for posters to be displayed by parishioners was limited with only 6 responding. It was AGREED to purchase 20-plenty banner (£100.0) to display at the village entrance. Furthermore, it was AGREED to include the phrase "Welcomes careful Drivers" on the new village sign when obtaining a quote. Posters to put into Ottertales. It was also AGREED to start proceedings to reduce speed in the village to 20mph.
 - d. Councilors were briefed regarding the CPRE grant for maintenance of Village fingerpost signs, prices to be obtained.
 - e. It was AGREED to purchase a cigarette receptacle for the bus shelter.
 - f. Cllr Gardener will enquire about obtaining a painted picture of the Church for the new sign.
 - g. Recent Foamstream treatment of weeds in the playpark have been successful. It was RESOLVED to continue to monitor the situation with a review in the spring. Possibly to apply throughout the village.
 - h. It was AGREED to contact local contractor about siting the new bench between the big fir tree on Brownie Copse and the dog bin.
 - i. Update regarding the payment for the coach to Malvern Spring Flower Show.
 - j. Update regarding the repairs for the playground equipment.
 - k. Vegetation around Salt-bin has been cleared.
 - l. Angling Association has been contacted; they have agreed to clear some of the vegetation along the boundary fences of the properties on Estuary Park. However, in some instances the undergrowth is coming from within the gardens. He did mention that there has been quite a lot of 'stuff' being dumped over the fences to include a shed which had a nest of rats underneath. Further advised that several properties have put gates in their fences which is not permitted. Additionally, Mink have now taken up residence in one of the ponds.
 - m. Facebook post regarding 'considerate parking'. Cllr Sanders informed Council that SPS have placed some stickers on fly-parking vehicles over the past week. Concerns particularly raised about parking on the corner of Brookside Rd and Church Hill.
 - n. A further price to be obtained regarding the replacement of the Bollard by the play park.
2. It was RESOLVED to amend Clerks working hours to between 10-15hrs a week, to work flexibly - to be reviewed at the 6-months appraisal.

145/25. Highways

It was AGREED to continue with all motions proposed in Item 1c in 145/25 Parish Clerks report and consider painting on the road 'Pedestrians on the Road' lane when an audit is carried out. It was also AGREED to obtain prices for the new Village entrance sign.

146/25. Village Emergency Plan

- 1. Cllrs AGREED contacting neighbouring Parishes and arranging a joint Emergency planning workshop to formulate an effective Village plan.
- 2. Cllrs also AGREED that a Riparian Workshop would be useful.
- 3. Cllr Dodge asked for someone to agree to set up the new pump which is in the Village garage and that a new combination lock be purchased.
- 4. Cllr Gardener suggested that we contact the Charity which provides resources for properties that are likely to be flooded, AGREED to pursue.

147/25. Enhancements

- a. Action items from the Village Walk round in August will be discussed as they become actionable.
- b. All AGREED to renew membership with The Open Spaces Society (£45.00).
- c. Play Pitch Strategy survey to be completed. Cllr Parker is keen to engage as it may be beneficial for the village with potential additional funding and will complete the Survey.

- d. Cllr Gardener advised that the Community Payback manager has had problems contacting Councillors.

148/25. OPPT

- a. Chair of the Community Shop Committee has requested that the membership to Plunkett Foundation is renewed. Cllr Parsons proposed that an additional grant of £500 was made available. It was AGREED that the reserve fund would be 'topped up' to £500.
- b. Cllr Parker asked if the membership of the Plunkett Foundation covered other enterprises within the village. Chair of Village shop committee confirmed that an additional membership would be required
- c. Chair of OPPT thanked the Parish Council for their support to date.

149/25. Flag Policy

Flag flying policy was circulated prior to the meeting. Policy wording amended to remove the word 'racial' which was unanimously AGREED. A review of the dates and appropriate flag to be flown was carried out post meeting and AGREED.

150/25. Reports of Representative.

1. Public Rights of Way (PROW) – None made
2. OPRA – (T Gardener) A very successful 25th Anniversary party. Next event is the 2nd of November Firework display. Cllr Gardener and Cllr Bradbury are happy to be the Parish Councilor representatives on the night. Request made that the PC purchase the Fireworks as in previous years AGREED. Invites to be circulated soon for the annual Christmas Dinner
3. Steart Ward – (D Dodge) – Residence meeting was held between WWT, Internal Drainage Board and EA. WWT have been raising the water level to maintain the habitat for the birds, but this was putting properties at risk of flooding. The 'Fish Gate' valve which allows the drainage of fresh water from the levels when the tide falls has become warped due to the level of silt that has built up from the River Parrett. The cost to replace is over £120,000.00. In addition, there is a culvert which passes under the road, to assist with drainage, but this is too small. They are waiting for the new budget before any decisions are made, which won't be before March/April next year.
4. Social Media/Website – (D Dodge). Website is up and running. Clerk reminded that she still needs to send in picture and bio! A discussion took place regarding the protocol for monitoring comments on FB, some of which have been quite hateful. Cllr Dodge can 'hide' posts on All Things Combswich but is uncomfortable in doing so. Chair was particularly concerned that her address was posted on FB recently without her consent. Potentially look at obtaining a generic postal address. Additionally look to find who is Admin of the All Things Combswich FB page.
5. SALC Community and Wellbeing Fund – (S Parker) Cllr Parker emphasized how important it is for the PC, Garden Club and Art Club to work together for the benefit of the community. Pumpkin carving 29th October, other village groups are being invited to take part. The Art Group is struggling financially. Cllr Parker has proposed that Art Group is subsidised to the tune of £5.00 per week to assist with the Village Hall rent. A discussion then took place about the possibility of Art and Craft group merging. Fodo Higginson, from the Community Fund to be invited to meet with Council to explain how the grant works – potentially come half an hour early. Cllr Parker advised the Council that Otterhampton is one of the smallest Council who have been granted such a large fund. We are likely to be asked to do a presentation.
6. Otterhampton Village Hall – (Cllr L Parsons)
 - a. New disabled door switch will be installed shortly.
 - b. Repair of ramp is being arranged.
 - c. All users of the hall are advised that only assistance dogs are allowed into the hall.
 - d. Upcoming events, Family Bingo 8th Nov, AGM 3rd Dec, Next meeting 15th October.
 - e. Christmas Raffle tickets are on sale
7. Downsborough LCN – (Cllr C Sanders) See Annex A
8. SSG – None made

151/25. Correspondence/Communications

1. Response to FOI request regarding the flying of flags.
2. Facebook post regarding support for the displaying of 20's plenty signs – 5 responses
3. Confirmation that the Defibs are all now up and running and registered.
4. Dr Paul Elliston regarding his feedback from the meeting held on the 22nd of September
5. Request from Combwich Community Shop Project chair regarding Plunkett membership.
6. Correspondence from Cllr Dodge recognising the works that have been carried out by a member of this parish with regards to the flooding on Brookside. His effort has been recognised and is very much appreciated.
7. Power Point slides by Angie Greaney – Making It Happen, Asset Based Community Development in Somerset 2019-2025.
8. Parish Briefing Sheets
 - a. SFOR Poster with QR code (posted on FB)
 - b. Revenues and Benefits System Software down time
 - c. Somerset Council Community Working Review – survey <https://tally.so/r/m6qpEk> (deadline 17th Oct)
 - d. Playing pitch strategy (PPS)
 - e. Built Sports Facilities Strategy (BSFS)
9. Update after meeting with Richard Dunn.
10. Request for £30.00 contribution and support from Somerset Art Works – Agreed to not grant by all Cllrs
11. Presentation pack from Hinkley Point C Community Forum.
12. Letter from parishioner regarding making a space near the play park designated for the elderly within the village.
13. Correspondence from MOP requesting advise about any restrictions prior to going to planning regarding conversion to a short-term serviced accommodation.
14. Update from Cllr Rodrigues regarding current Planning Application issues
15. Response from CPRE regarding funding for the signposts.

152/25. Forthcoming Meetings

1. OVH Meeting – 15.10.25
2. Main site Forum Hinkley Point – 16.10.25
3. Transport meeting – 13.11.25
4. OVH AGM – 3.12.2025 @ 2000
5. Downsborough LCN – 10.12.25
6. Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day – 15.10.25

153/25. Register of Interest

Needs to be updated on SCC website

154/25. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 13th November 2025 at 7pm.Meeting closed at 21:30

Annex A

Report from Downsborough LCN meeting held on the 17th September 2025. Report submitted by Cllr C Sanders – Vice Chair OPC

Opening the meeting PCSO Trevor Phillips gave a brief insight of the crimes taking place in particular the countryside, farm thefts of Land Rovers is on the increase and recently 4 thefts in Burtle one being the theft of solar panels. In the town of Bridgwater knife crime is increasing and antisocial behaviour, and youths committing crime thinking that dressing head to toe in black they cannot be identified, but they forget the way in which they walk or run, is identifiable.

Mike Hodson of Spaxton's Community Land Trust formed in 2017, Housing Needs Assessor. Volunteers were to explore the need for affordable housing. 4 sites were marked with 11 homes needed and 1 for a disabled person. Finally, they acquired a site and Planning Application has been submitted in 2025. To achieve this takes hard work and a tremendous amount of patience.

Three Parish Councils have withdrawn from the LCN, Nether Stowey, Cannington and Bridgwater outskirts - has no benefit to them. A review of the LCN is to be made after being formed 2 years ago.

The meeting closed 8pm with 7 attendees. Numbers have really dropped.

*At the end of the meeting I spoke with PSCO Trevor, saying we rarely see them in our parish these days. He told me the ones we did have been relocated and told me the best way to contact the local police is online with any concerns or reports to

9626Trevor@AvonandSomerset.police.uk also
7317Fin@AvonandSomerset.police.uk

Added to report post submission

the contact telephone numbers for the PCSO's 24 hour non-emergency & crime reporting: 101 for Crimestoppers: 111. These numbers will still reach them when anyone speaks to Control.