

## **Otterhampton Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting**

Held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Otterhampton Village Hall, commencing at 7pm

#### **Present**

- Cllr L Parsons (Chair)
- Cllr C Sanders (Vice Chair)
- Cllrs M Haycraft, S Parker, D Dodge
- Mrs S Juniper (Clerk/RFO)
- Cllr M Caswell (Somerset Council) plus 3 members of the public

#### **1.26 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Bolt.

#### **2.26 Declarations of Interest & dispensations**

No declarations of interest were made.

#### **3.26 Public Participation (including Ward Councilor Reports)**

3.26.1 Councilor Caswell reported that unfortunately Somerset Council does not have the funds to repair the Fingerpost sign, he will email the portfolio holder and ask why it hasn't been repaired. It is thought that this repair might be covered by the relevant car insurance. He further advised that the green telephone exchange box was also damaged.

3.26.2 Somerset Council are looking to increase the Community Charge by 11%, which is approximately £30 per month on a Band D property.

3.26.3 Also advised those present, that there may be changes regarding Parish Council boundaries, although information is not readily available regarding this at present.

3.26.4 An offer was made by a member of the public to repair the damaged Fingerpost. NB – post meeting this offer was politely declined due to Health and Safety risks.

3.26.5 A request was made to purchase protection against the use of a strimmer, for the bike rack adjacent to the bus shelter, which was APPROVED.

#### **4.26 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **5.26 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

5.26.1 Cllr Sanders reported that she has had confirmation early December from an operator from Drainline that the drainage pipework at Crossways and Brookside is now clear. The situation has greatly improved since.

5.26.2 On the 18<sup>th</sup> December due to rainfall during the day, the village pump was deployed for 8 hours due to water ingress into properties along Brookside Road. The water came from the field behind the properties. A suggestion was made that a French drain is needed along the property/field boundary.

5.26.3 Residents in Dame Withycombe Villas have reported blocked drains via Fix My Street, but they haven't had a response to date. Cllr Caswell agreed to contact Cllr Wilkins (SC) regarding Fix My Street. Is this no longer the mode of reporting issues?

5.26.4 Accidents occurred along the C182 at the turning for Steart and another at the turning into Combwich village on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2025. Matter to be raised at the forthcoming Dowsborough LCN Highways meeting. Cllr Bolt to be informed.

Initialed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

5.26.5 Cllr Parker advised that he is trying to arrange a meeting with the residents who maybe potentially impacted by the Hornbeams on Council land adjacent to Wharf Road. After taking independent advise, the Hornbeams require a management program.

## 6.26 Planning

6.26.1 39/25/00007/FHY 31, Estuary Park, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2QP – single storey extension. The Application was SUPPORTED by all members present.

6.26.2 Three applications made by BT Openreach to install telegraph poles in Estuary Park and Kiln Close have been granted under permitted development rules.

## 7.26 Finance

7.26.1 The Bank Reconciliation and Budget Statement for September were circulated prior to the meeting and were APPROVED. The balance as of the end of December 2025 was **£68,992.56**

7.26.2 Following payments as per the schedule circulated were APPROVED (inclusive of VAT)

Staff Costs		£1550.32
SALC	Responding to Planning Application Course	£35.00
Somerset Council	Grass Cutting (Oct 2025)	£611.40
Stone + Partner Architecture	(From shop grant)	£600.00
Scribe	Accounts software	£37.50

7.26.3 Interest received £33.91

7.26.4 2026-27 budget was APPROVED by all present. It was further AGREED by all, that the 2026-27 precept should be set at £32,250

Cllr Caswell left the meeting 2000

## 8.26 Parish Clerk Brief

Members were briefed regarding matters currently being dealt with. See attached at Annex A

8.26.1 To be actioned, arrange for the hedge to be cut as you enter the village on the left-hand side, near to the sign.

## 9.26 Proposed Local Boundary Changes

Consideration was given to the proposed Local Government Boundary changes. Cllr Parker suggested that consideration should be given to asking for the southern boundary of the parish to be extended Southwards in order to encompass the 'Combwich Ponds' and to follow the southern land ownership boundary of Putnells Farm, across to the C182, to join with the existing boundary on the west side of the C182 removing the anomalies on land whose Title Deed number is 17196012, it was AGREED unanimously.

## 10.26 Report of Representatives

10.26.1 See Annex B

- a. Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
- b. Steart Ward (Cllr Dodge)
- c. Village Shop Steering Group (G Parrett)
- d. Dowsborough LCN (Cllr Sanders)

## 11.26 Correspondence/Communication requiring consideration

- a. Questionnaire from Lloyds Bank regarding information on what the funds are used for in the Reserve Acct.
- b. 20's plenty E-news webinar – *Cllr Parker attended the webinar*
- c. Response from the Coastal Place Partnership

Initialed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**12.26 Forthcoming Meetings/Events/Training**

- a. Community Forum 15.01.26
- b. Hinkley Main site Forum 12.02.26
- c. Transport Forum 12.03.26
- d. OVH Trustees Meeting – Date to be advised.
- e. Highways Forum 27.01.26

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – 12.02.26 @ 7pm**

Meeting closed at 2110

## Parish Clerk Brief Jan 2026

### **Flooding**

No further update due to Christmas break

### **Flooding Resilience Workshop**

Waiting for suitable dates from EVAG for surveys to be booked.

### **Village Resilience Workshop**

Waiting for date from Dowsborough LCN

### **Anchor Inn**

No further update due to Christmas break

### **Planning Breach reported**

No further information

### **Brownie Bench**

Bench has now been sited and is available for all to use

### **Abandoned boats on the pill**

No further information

### **Flags**

New flag up and flying

### **Reports of trees being felled on area opposite Nursery Close**

No further action due to Christmas break

## Parish Clerk Brief Jan 2026

### Public Rights of Way – Mr B Birkenhead

The gate in the field opening onto the car park on Brookside Road is damaged and not working, it has been reported. However, it was advised by Councillors that this is a matter for the farmer/landowner as the field belongs to them.

### Dowsborough LCN meeting-Cllr Sanders

The meeting was better attended on this occasion and opened with the Police giving us an update, announcing the Dowsborough area is now to include Williton and Kilve. There will be 5 Beat Managers and 11 PCSO's covering the area as of January 2026. To contact them on all issues ring 101.

A question was asked, what is the ruling on E bikes? Police are able to stop them, though PCSO's cannot. The riders on E bikes can reach the speed of 50mph. When E bikes are confiscated they are crushed.

Fodo Higginson of SALC talked on the issue of Public Transport, the lack of it in rural areas. At this point a representative of Somerset Council announced there would be 6 new mini buses to be added to the fleet of Slinky Buses.

A resident of Combwich, who had accompanied Fodo to the meeting, stated she would like to form a Steering group as she felt there is a need to address the lack of transport for Students to enable them to get to their courses at College. A suggestion was a Community Car Scheme. The initial problem for this resident was where to start to look for help. I spoke at this point and invited her to attend the OPC meeting, taking place the next evening to raise this and that it would be a good stepping stone.

Of interest, the Speaker will be Clare Moody, Police and Crime Commissioner at the next meeting being changed from 18th March to 31st March 2026.

The AGM will be 17th June 2026 with the focus on rural transport.

### Stear Dec 2025 report - Cllr Dodge

Nothing happens in Steart!

23 Dec Steart isolated from the outside world!

Stear residents preparing for the big day were left in a kerfuffle due to an articulated lorry leaving the road and becoming trapped in a rhine about 07:30 on 23 Dec 2025. Residents were prevented from entering or leaving Steart with the road closed between Steart gate and Steart Common.

All was well when the Sainsbury delivery vehicle was able to make it through at approximately 14:20 with no Christmas dinners reported to be affected by the delay.

### Stear Habitat Creation Scheme

Bristol Port Authority Announced a drop in session:  
STEART HABITAT CREATION SCHEME

13 January  
Drop-in between 14:30 - 18:30  
Stockland Bristol, Village Hall

### Stear Christmas Tree

The Steart Christmas Tree looked splendid standing outside St Andrews Church with thanks to OPRA and Robin Prowse.

**Village Shop Community – G Perrett**

Good progress is being made by the Shop Committee who are considering several options for siting the village shop . A report was submitted to the Council regarding the garages on Brookside Road.

Professional advice and consultation, under the guidance of The Plunkett Foundation, has been carried out over the past 18 months, with members of the Committee undertaking training for when the shop comes to fruition.

Councillors requested that, subject to commercial sensitivities, the Committee provide outline/briefing information to the Council and villagers, in order to ensure they remain engaged. It was confirmed that the Shop Committee hopes to hold an open day in February, in addition information will be published in OtterTales in due course.

Councillors acknowledged the hard work being carried out by the 12 members of the Shop Committee, which is very much appreciated.

**Transport Forum – Cllr Dodge**

Cllr Dodge informed the members that the workforce uplift at Hinkley C site which started at 10,000 in 2024. The numbers are now 14,000 rising to 15,000 by summer of this year.

Works is being carried out on developing a Fly parking App by Hinkley, so that misdemanors can be reported directly.

Reporting cars is further complicated by cars not being registered to the worker at Hinkley but to their wife for example. This means that there is little the authorities can do in that situation.