

Otterhampton Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Held on 12 March 2026 at Otterhampton Village Hall, commencing at 7pm

Present

- Cllr L Parsons (Chair)
- Cllr C Sanders (Vice Chair)
- Cllrs M Haycraft, C Bradbury, S Parker
- Cllrs M Caswell (SC), Cllr B Bolt (SC)
- Mrs S Juniper (Clerk/RFO)
- plus 9 members of the public

29/26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Gardener and Cllr Dodge

30/26 Declarations of Interest & Dispensation

No declarations were made.

31/26. Public Participation

Cllr Caswell reported that he believed the 'Fly-Parking App' was available and as the PC hasn't received it, yet he will chase up with the Enforcement team. The App will allow the reporting of fly-parking issues 'live' so that the Enforcement team will be able to respond a lot quicker.

He also explained that he had met the Contractor who cleared the drains on Brookside Road after the recent flooding. It was confirmed that the pipes have been cleared under No.55. However, it appears that the pipe also goes along Brookside Road towards the garages where there is a very large 'catch pit', like an attenuation pond which was not known about. Unfortunately, they cannot clear the pipes beyond this, now as it is under an extension. He confirmed that there is a meeting planned for the end of the month between all the stakeholders.

Somerset Council have now reduced the increase in Council Tax from 11% to 4.99% after the increase was stopped by the Government.

Cllr Bolt added that the opposition to Somerset Council did put forward alternatives savings to the budget to include costings for gully clearance, SEND proposals and the repairing of potholes but this was not considered at the Budget meeting.

It was confirmed that he continues to work towards the speed being reduced on the C182 outside the village, particularly considering the three accidents since Christmas.

Three members of the public raised their concerns about the series of issues they are having with the builders /developers working at Cornish Close. It is understood that the builders would be erecting fencing between the development and the end of their garden, but this has not happened. The height of the new buildings is such that it is very easy to step from the new houses into the original properties at Nursery Close not only causing a H&S issue but also security concerns. The height of the ground potential creates a further issue when cars are parking as the lights will be shining directly into the back of the properties. It was also mentioned that it is believed that a small window has not been positioned on the property as per Planning consent. The builders have been quite disruptive resulting with a villager not being able to open her curtains when the builders are on site. Work has also been undertaken on a boundary wall, which doesn't belong to the development.

Clerk advised that she has tried to contact the Builder concerned via email, but they have not responded to date.

Signed by Chair _____

Date _____

Cllr Caswell asked for all information to be passed onto him, and he will investigate the matter further; this was agreed to be actioned by the Parishioners concerned.

A further concern was raised by a Parishioner regarding the extent of grass mowing that takes place in the village. She believes that mowing takes place on a fortnightly basis but was reassured that the Parish Council has the grass on the land that belongs to the village cut only 10 times a year. She was advised that the grass area she is referring to is Highways land. Cllr Bolt agreed to mention this at his next meeting. Cllr Parker asked him to mention at his next meeting about the trees on this land and is there a Tree Management Plan for them?

32/26. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2026 were approved and signed as a correct record.

33/26. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes on the Agenda.

Cllr Parker advised the members that the changes recently submitted to the Local Governance Boundary Review was not in-line with the advice that we had been given. The next review Local Governance Review will be in May; we need to re-submit the information again regarding the proposed boundary change.

Cllr Parker provided an update regarding the Lychgate at St Peter’s Church – see Appendix A. It is clear that the Parish Council have a responsibility for the War Memorial. Cllr Parker proposed that this matter was to become an Agenda item, so that he could update the members regularly, which was AGREED.

34/26. Planning

- a. 39/26/00001/LE & 39/26/00002. Crossways Farm, 60 Brookside Road, Combwich, Bridgwater TA5 2PP. Erection of detached garage and home office – PLANNING REFUSED.

35/26. Finance

- a. To approve the Bank Reconciliation and budget statement for February 2026
- b. Total Closing Balance as of end of Feb 2026 - £63,630.30
- c. The following invoices were APPROVED to be paid.

d. Expenses

Various	Refund for pump equipment and fuel	£149.70
Amenity Choice	Refund of payment for Strimmer Guard	£23.08
Staff Costs	Wages and pension contribution	£1248.78
SALC	Training	£155.00
Baker Dolphin Coach	Refund to Garden Club - SALC	£74.50
Fabric UK.com	SALC	£34.28
Purnells	Ottertales	£299.80

e. Income received

- Interest from bank £29.82
- f. A discussion was had regarding allowing the Clerk to have a bank debit card and the amount be set at £500.00 in line with Item 9.2 in the Financial Regs 2025. However, it was further suggested that in order to provide better protection when purchasing online a Credit card may be more beneficial. This will require the Financial Regs 2025 to be amended at the next Full Council meeting.

- g. Cllr Parsons proposed that Cllr Bradbury who is not currently a signatory on the bank account be appointed to verify the bank reconciliation of all accounts for the end of the year, this was CARRIED.
- h. All members AGREED to appoint Mr Richard Young as the Internal Auditor for the 2025-2026 accounts.

Cllr Bolt left the meeting

36/26. Parish Clerk Report

See Annex B

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on the 28th of May at 1900 in the Village Hall
The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on the 28th of May in the Village Hall
The August Walk-round will be held on the 13th August 2026 @ 1800 at the top of Church Hill

37/26. Village Enhancement/Amenities

It was AGREED to extend the grass cutting Contract with Somerset Council for 2-years.
Advise received from Steve Parker (Not Cllr Parker) from English Nature to cut back further the sea couch grass behind the goal post by approximately 10m, Clerk to action.

Motion was CARRIED to instruct Somerset Council to continue with emptying the 3 x bins for the forthcoming year.

All members AGREED that an application should be started to register The Anchor Inn as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) this was unanimously delegated to the Clerk with the assistance of Cllr Parker.

Cllr Parker advised the members that utilising the SALC Grant, an approach has been made to Mano Amano (street artist), to do a performance on the common July 2026. This will be part of a village event to launch the annual Flower Show which will include a village picnic, pizza van, ice-cream van etc. The cost will be funded from the grant and the £1000.00 which the PC agreed to put towards the SALC fund for 2026-27. He further advised that it is expected this event to generate funds. All members AGREED to support this event.

Somerset Council is embarking on a Strategy for Open Spaces and Sports Facilities. Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership is running the 'Coastal Place Partnership – Locally Trusted Organisations Project. These two health and wellbeing policy initiatives have the potential to greatly benefit the parish of Otterhampton. Somerset Council are also consulting on updating its Adult Social Care Strategy. In regard to the villages 'open spaces' "Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership' have suggested that it would be useful to know how the community want to use this space and co-design what this would look like. Cllr Parker proposed that the Parish Council embarks on this process and considers how open spaces in the custodianship of the Parish Council can be used for the health and wellbeing of the community, by putting information in OtterTales and consulting with the Community. All members AGREED to take this forward.

38/26 Flooding – Brookside Road

See Annex C – Report from Cllr Dodge

39/26 Otterhampton Village Hall

All members agreed to support the application by the OVH Bar Committee to the Somerset Community Foundation for refurbishment works to the area behind the bar.

Initialed by _____

Date _____

40/26 Governance

- a. The Councilors AGREED that the Asset Register circulated prior to the meeting was a true and accurate record.
- b. It was RESOLVED to carry consideration of the Risk Assessment forward to the following Full Council meeting in April.
- c. Cllr Parsons proposed that responsibility for completion of the Dog Fouling and Control Survey is to be delegated to the Clerk, which was AGREED unanimously.
- d. All members AGREED to support the response to the NPPF Consultation survey submitted by Cllr Dodge.
- e. All members AGREED to delegate completion of the SALC Parish, Town & City Council Survey. It was further AGREED that the Clerk circulated a copy of the survey prior to submission. Update- Post meeting, it was not possible to do so.

41/26 Report of Representatives

See Annex D

42/26 Correspondence/Communication requiring consideration

- a. E-mail received confirming the Somerset Prepared have received the details and photos and will be sharing with the Councils Flood and Coastal Team
- b. Life-Saving Portable Medical Equipment Appeal (S137) It was AGREED by all members present to make a Donation of £100.00 as this would be a benefit to the Community with the Air Ambulance having been required in the past within the village.
- c. To approve request by Hill House to site a temporary sign at the entrance to the village. All members AGREED to allow Hill House to display a banner at the entrance to the village for a period of a month not exceeding the size of the banner currently displayed by the school.
- d. Complaint regarding Hinkley Contractors walking in the road and response from Relationship Manager.
- e. Boat club response to letter regarding the unauthorised works on the Pill.
- f. Letter to confirm that the potential purchase of the old village shop has been withdrawn.
- g. Enquiry from Hinkley regarding works to the pill – who is responsible? No one was aware of any works that have been carried out.
- h. Request to put an Assembly Point sign on the car park opposite OVH. Permission was unanimously granted.
- i. Letter from Hinkley Point regarding the removal of the abandoned boats.

43/26. Forthcoming Meetings/Events/Training

- a. Bridgwater Constituency Parish Council Meeting 14th March – 0900
- b. Flood Volunteer Workshop – 16th March 2026, 1800-2030, Seavington Millenium Hall
- c. Hinkley Point A & B SSG 17th March 2026 – 0900, The Canal Side, Marsh Lane
- d. Emergency Planning Workshop 23rd March – 1730-2030, Wembdon Village Hall
- e. Dowsborough LCN Meeting – 31st March 1900
- f. Rural Transport meeting – 25th March (Zoom)

45/26 Matters to be considered for the next Agenda

- a. The Village Shop
- b. The Lychgate

46/26. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 9th April 2025 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 2050

**Update regarding the Lychgate: St Peter's Church, Combwich
Cllr Parker**

30th Jan 1919

Otterhampton Parish Council considered

-Whether it is the wish of the Parish to have a War Memorial

-What form this shall take?

The minutes state that the Parish were greatly indebted to the Soldiers and Sailors who have taken part in the war, and they were heartily glad to see them back again.

The Parish deeply sympathised with those who have been wounded and especially with the relatives of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr A Leigh, Chair of the Parish Council put forward a resolution

Shall there be a War Memorial?

This was carried unanimously.

After some discussion it was proposed by Mr H Norman and seconded by Mr W Wilkins.

That there shall be placed in Combwich Church a Role of Honour showing the names of those who have made the supreme sacrifice and also those who have served their country either as a Soldier or Sailor.

A committee was then elected to carry out the scheme consisting of Miss Clifford, Rev Rees, A. Leigh, H Norman W. Pearce and W Davey.

Thes was also a discussion about erecting a YMCA hut.

(YMCA huts played an important part in the Grear War and its aftermath in providing service personnel support on the front line and upon their return home).

25th Marich 1919

Otterhampton Parish Council unanimously decided to erect in Combwich Church a table whereon shall be inscribed the names of the who served in any of HM Forces.

The Parish raised a total of £23 15s 2d. The estimated cost was £50 so a social and concert was to be held to raise the reminder.

During the following discussion it was raised, that if the tablet was in the Church, no one will see it except during Divine Service. Mr A Leigh said that he had no doubt that the Rev. Rees will consent to have the Church kept open.

**Report from Parish Clerk
Mrs Stephanie Juniper**

20mph in the village. – Unfortunately, the Highways meeting was cancelled, no further information to consider at this time.

Angling Association – There remains an issue with vegetation growing over boundary fences. Clerk has chased the Lake Manager who has once again agreed to look into it.

Food vans – The Fish & Chip van is now visiting the village on a monthly basis and was very well supported. A Pizza van will be starting on the 10th of April, again on a monthly basis and will be parked outside OVH

Boat Club – Have agreed to clear debris from the embankment and explained they were not aware the area was a SSI.

Abandoned Boats – Contacted by Stacey Walker from EDF who has advised that Notices are being served regarding the removal of the boats from their land with the expectation that they will be removed after 60-days.

Annex C

Flooding – Brookside Road Cllr D Dodge

On Thursday 19th February, a meeting was held between me, the landowner and Emma Robertson of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). I arrived at the bus stop lay-by at Crossways, Combwich at 10:20 for the scheduled meeting at 10:30. At around 10:30, or shortly thereafter, I observed two individuals, who I now know to be the Landowner and Emma Robertson, exiting the field adjacent to No. 55 Brookside Road. It appeared that they had arranged to meet prior to my arrival in order to undertake a walk around the site.

I introduced myself and outlined the problems currently facing residents of Brookside Road. I explained that my aim was to find a way of bringing all relevant parties together in order to work towards a resolution. Emma Robertson stated that there were no signs that the area had been farmed irresponsibly. I clarified that no accusations of irresponsible farming had been made. However, I noted that there is now evidence suggesting that maize crops can have a significant effect on surface water run-off and associated flood risks and that this factor should therefore be considered.

I further explained that I was working to involve our local MP in arranging a meeting of all stakeholders and invited FWAG to attend. Emma Robertson indicated that she would wish to attend, possibly accompanied by a senior member of FWAG. Both the landowner and Emma Robertson made it clear that they are willing to work towards resolving the issues faced by residents of Brookside Road.

Following the meeting, I requested a survey report from the Operations Manager of Drain-Fix and submitted a Freedom of Information request to Somerset Council to obtain details of drainage works that have been carried out in the area to date.

I am currently awaiting confirmation of meeting details from Mark Weston, who is coordinating the key stakeholder meeting and will, of course, update the Parish Council as soon as I have any new information.

Initialed by _____

Date _____

**Report of Representatives
Public Rights of Way – Mr B Birkenhead**

Mr Birkenhead confirmed, after carrying out research and speaking to a local farmer that there should be notices displayed on electric fences not exceeding 50-100m intervals and a length of plastic tubing at least 1m in length to protect the public. It was advised to the members that the fences have now been removed.

**OPRA
Cllr Bradbury**

Easter Egg hunt is being arranged for 3rd April with a quiz night on the Sunday 5th April at 2000.

OPRA committee are looking to organise a fun dog show, proposed date the 27th of June 2026

**SALC
Cllr Parker**

Garden Club have put together their program for next year. A Propagation Day is being held on Saturday 21st March 2026. They have also organised a daytrip to the Bishops Palace and Gardens on the 27th of May.

Art Club has three new members, recruitment continues to be challenging.

Cllr Parker agreed that all events were going to be sustainable in order to keep the events going.

**Village Shop Committee
Mr B Birkenhead**

It was confirmed that purchasing the original shop is no longer an option as the vendors have withdrawn the property for sale.

A second area is being explored by the Committee.