

Otterhampton Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Held on 12 February 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, D Dodge, T Gardener
- Mrs S Juniper (Clerk/RFO) plus 5 members of the public

13.26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr M Caswell

14.26 Declarations of Interest & Dispensation

Declaration of Interest was made by Cllr S Parker regarding Item 22.26 – Church Lynch Gate – War memorial.

A discussion ensued regarding should Cllr Sanders make a Declaration of Interest when Item 20.26 is discussed, as her property is directly involved in the flooding. It was agreed that due to personal experiences, Cllr Sanders would contribute with insight to the matter, therefore, was permitted a dispensation by the Full Council.

15.26. Public Participation

It was reported by a member of the parish that ‘Fly-Parking’ seems to be becoming more prevalent within the village again. It appears that some Contractors who are residing in the village are driving to Brookside Rd and of Estuary Park and parking there, not always safely or conveniently, not to mention the impact on the environment. This is starting to cause tension between Parishioners and Contractors, a couple of cars have been specifically mentioned. Concerns were further raised about the amount of time it takes for the Enforcement Team to address any complaints with one car being allowed to park for over 3 months. Cllr Dodge has agreed to take this to the Transport meeting next month.

A further question was asked about the refurbishment of the lifebuoy stand and notice board on the Pill, had the works been carried out. He was advised by the Clerk that this work is on her list of jobs to do, but due to time constraints she hasn’t been able to sort it. It will be actioned as workload allows.

16.26. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January were approved and signed as a correct record with the following amendment. Cllr Gardener should have been recorded as being present at the meeting.

17.26. Planning

1. 39/25/00007/FHY 31 Estuary Park, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2QP – single storey extension – Decision APPROVED
2. 39/26/00001/LE Crossway Farm, 60 Brookside Road, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2PP - Erection of a detached garage & home office.
It was AGREED by all to file an OBJECTION to this application on the grounds of a) not being in keeping with the local area and b) the size of the building in front of a listed building
3. 39/26/00002 Crossways Farm, 60 Brookside Road, Combwich, Bridgwater TA5 2PP. Erection of a detached garage and home office
It was AGREED by all to file an OBJECTION to this application on the grounds of a) not being in keeping with the local area and b) the size of the building in front of a listed building.
4. 39/24/00005 – Manor Farm, Church Lane, Otterhampton, TA5 2PT – Construction of an earth slurry store and associated landscaping – GRANTED PERMISSION

18.26. Finance

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 January 2026 was **£66,496.70**
2. The following payments as per the schedule circulated were APPROVED (inclusive of VAT)

EVAG	Donation for flood prevention equipment (S137)	£27.15
SALC	Training Course	£50.00
SC	Emptying bins	£608.40
M Narraway	Clearing of vegetation around salt bin	£83.70
Combwich GC	Speaker Fees from SALC Grant	£100.00
Staff Costs	Less overpayment due to typo in previous month (£60.00)	£1388.31
	Internet use and use of office	£26.00
OVH	Use of village hall by Shop Committee	£36.00
OVH	Use of village hall by Art Club – SALC fund	£18.00
Purnell's	Printing of Ottertales	£248.00
Tesco	Mobile phone top-up (to be refunded to Clerk)	£10.00
Topup.com	Mobile phone top-up (to be refunded to Clerk)	£17.85
BCW Office Products Ltd	Road signs – Flooding	£88.00

Income received.

Interest received	£34.81
Donation from 1 st Combwich Brownies for bench	£450.00

3. Clerk confirmed that the 2026-27 Precept has been lodged with Somerset Council

19.26 Parish Clerk Brief

1. See Annex A
2. Dates of forthcoming meetings for 2026 were confirmed as:
12th March 2026
9th April 2026
14th May 2026
11th June 2026
9th July 2026
Aug – Village Walk through (TBC)
10th September 2026
8th October 2026
12th November 2026
10th December 2026
14th January 2027
4. Clerks annual leave was AGREED as per briefing sheet.

20.26 Flooding along Brookside Road

1. It was RESOLVED that the PC formally recognises the ongoing flood risk affecting properties in the parish as a matter of resident well-being and duty of care, noting that elderly residents have been repeatedly undertaking hazardous flood mitigation activities, including operating pumps during dark hours in conditions involving flood water and electricity.
2. The Parish Council further RESOLVES to take proactive steps to bring forward a flood mitigation solution as a matter of urgency, including progressing discussions with the land owners and seeking professional advice on feasible works, such as an attenuation pond in the field adjacent

to No 54 Brookside Rd and to consider the use of Parish Council funds to enable delivery within a timescale, which more accurately reflects the absolute priority this work should take.

Cllr Parsons proposed an amendment to remove 'consider the use of Parish Council funds'. The amendment reads 'to support applications for grants'. It was seconded by Cllr Dodge. The amended motion was carried unanimously.

3. Cllr Dodge advised the members that a meeting has been arranged with FWAG and the landowner which he hopes to attend. After writing numerous emails he has been able to arrange a joint meeting between the PC and stakeholders from the Local Authority and Contractor. An update was given regarding the findings of the Contractor and their recommendations of works required.

21.26 Governance

1. The draft What's Ap Policy 2026 having been circulated to members, were considered. It was RESOLVED that the What's Ap Policy 2026 be ADOPTED with immediate effect.
2. The draft IT Policy 2026 having been circulated to members, were considered. It was resolved to amend Para 2.1.6 to read," the individual responsible may be liable to meet a third of the replacement cost of the loss/damage" The amended IT Policy 2026 was then ADOPTED.

22.26 Church Lych Gate – War Memorial

1. It was unanimously AGREED that the Parish Council, having the power to maintain war memorials, support and works in partnership with St. Peter's Church to apply for funding to the HP mitigation fund for:
 - 1) Temporary scaffolding to support the Lychgate.
 - 2) A structural engineering report
 - 3) Match funding with the War Memorial Trust to restore the village War Memorial

23.26 Dog Bins

1. Cllr Dodge proposed that the Council remove dog bins within the village. After discussion, the motion was put to a vote and was NOT CARRIED. Clerk to arrange for more Dog Fouling signs to be erected.

24.26 Reports of Representative.

1. See Annex B
2. Public Rights of Way (PROW) – A member of Public complained about electric fences being erected along footpaths with no signage displaying. Mr Birkenhead advised that it was legal to put up an electrical fence, but the farmer should be providing a way of crossing the fence without the person being electrocuted. He will investigate owners' responsibility of putting up warning signs and report back.

25.26 Correspondence/Communications

1. Road closure, lack of notification and planning for emergency access
Cllr Dodge has written a letter to the Council and Contractor regarding the lack of notification from them about the road closure and the poor planning.
2. Single County Wide, Public Spaces Protection Order – Dog Fouling and Control (Slides)
3. Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme amendments
4. Anchor Inn update from owner.
5. Surface Dressing Programme within the LCN Area 2026
6. Letters from Parishioners re: Fly Parking
7. Bridgwater Parish Council Summit Invite 2026
No Councilors able to attend. Clerk will go.

8. Citizens Advise request for donation.
It was proposed that a donation of £100.00 is made and agreed unanimously. (S137)
9. Letter from Cllr B Revans
10. Correspondence from parishioner re: electric fencing across PROW
11. Cllr Parker is warmly congratulated for his invitation to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party on May 12th, 2026.

26.26 Forthcoming Meetings

- Cllrs meeting with the Shop Committee – 17th Feb @ 1900, OVH
- Highways Meeting 10th March, Stogursey Village Hall
- Transport Forum 12th March 2026
- Bridgwater Constituency Parish Council Summit 15th March, Woolavington Village Hall
- Hinkley Point A & B SSG – TBC
- Emergency Planning Workshop – 23rd March, Wembdon Village Hall at 1730-2030
- Dowborough LCN meeting 31st March – 1900

27.26 Items for consideration next meeting

1. Consideration for the PC to apply to make the Anchor Inn a Community Asset. Money may become available under the new Community Empowerment Bill.
2. Clearance of vegetation on the embankment opposite the entrance to Nursery Close – Clerk can action.
3. Complaint from resident about Fender Orchard has not been swept for a long time and seems to be missed. – Clerk can action

28.26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 12th March 2026 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 21:10

Otterhampton Parish Council Parish Clerk Brief Feb 2026

Flooding – Agenda item.

In addition, our sincere thanks are expressed to Mr Prowse for the loan of his pump, which was very much appreciated.

Landowner has a meeting with a representative of FWAG, I have requested that Cllr Dodge and I are able to attend.

Flooding Resilience Workshop

This proved to be useful after the recent flooding along Brookside. Mr Bird was able to visit all the properties affected by the recent flooding and provide them with flood protection equipment.

Village Resilience Workshop

Dowsborough LCN have arranged a workshop to take place at Wembdon Village Hall on the 23rd of March at 1730-2030. After a promotion campaign we have had three people register an interest. We could do with more, but it's a start, I am still promoting it. Would it be advantageous for a Councilor to be on the working group? Cllr Parker has agreed.

Anchor Inn

Notification of potential planning control breach was lodged with Somerset Council on the 14 Jan 2026. I have chased this up as not heard anything yet, planning has confirmed that they have received the notification but have over 200 notifications to deal with at the moment with only 2 enforcement officers.

Contacted by Landlord via email who has advised that he is making efforts to find a new tenant for the pub.

Planning Breach reported – Cornish Close

Case now closed, no contravention of planning conditions found.

Fish & Chip Van

Fancy Fish & Chips will be visiting the village monthly starting the 24th of Feb. The van will be sited in the Anchor Inn car park, with the permission of the owner. Initially it will be monthly, but if the uptake is good and she is able to increase her capacity this might be more frequently. It is hoped that they will be a good level of support.

Local Government Boundary Feedback

Feedback completed and submitted accordingly.

Rural Transport

Meeting with Chair, Clerk and Anne from Dowsborough LCN. Anne is very keen to establish the extent of the problem regarding the lack of provision of rural transport within the Dowsborough Area. As such she is keen to establish a working party who will work to collate this information and look at potential solutions to the problem, if it proves there is one. Volunteers required please. To be Actioned - Clerk to approach member of the Parish to see if she is interested leading with this.

In the meantime, the Slinky bus is available to all ages, and it would be helpful if we could promote its use. We have agreed to use FB, put notices on the village noticeboard, include on the website and potentially in Otter Tales.

Annual Leave

I will be taking the following annual leave: - 16/2/26 until 20/2/26

6/4/26 until the 1/05/26 (2026-27 leave period)

I intend to carry over two weeks annual leave into the 2026-27 period, because I won't get them in before the end of 2025-26, as agreed with Chair.

Annex B

Report from Representatives

Otterhampton Village Hall Cllr Parsons

The village hall is replacing the flooring in the passageway, as the original carpet is not hard-wearing, we are just waiting for confirmation when the fitter will be coming, all user groups will be informed when this will go ahead.

The Murder Mystery night was a great success, and the committee are trying to arrange further events, look out for posters and on Facebook when we have confirmation.

Our next meeting will be 18th February.

Stearth news Cllr Dodge

Wessex water block only access to Stearth without notice or consideration for access for emergency services. Official letter of complaint requested to be sent from OPC.

Recent heavy rain caused localised flooding in Otterhampton, causing normal traffic to divert through Stockland-Bristol.

Two privately owned Emergency pumps deployed from Stearth to Combwich, yet the Combwich PC owned emergency pump was not seen in use.

Combwich Community Shop Project Steering Group Chair

Forthcoming Meeting with the Parish Members.

We have arranged to meet the council members on Tuesday 17th 2026 at 7:00pm.

Discussions will be associated with;

- Deeper understanding of our due diligence exercise to assess the best shop location
- Request for support & approval as we go forward with the project

Recent Progress as of Feb 1st 2026

Valuation and Negotiations (on our preferred shop location)

- A professional valuation exercise was concluded (Plunkett recommended).
- A full structural survey has been undertaken and the results analysed.
- A design concept document has been prepared showing how the existing building can be split

to provide a shop, a small café and separate living accommodation on the first floor.

- We have started detailed negotiations with the existing shop owners. Explaining the professional valuation assessment, structural survey, design review and the allowance for the estimated costs of adaptations and fitting out the existing shop. We will provide more details at our forthcoming meeting of our discussions

Information Gathering

- Discussions with Post Office Counters Ltd have revealed that the company would not be likely to assist in providing post office facilities or pay a postmaster salary, but would facilitate training and make stock and stationery available.
- The group has received two lots of training from the Plunkett Foundation on the formation and operation of an 'Executive Management Committee'. We have also attended a Plunkett conference (The big South West get together) in Exeter to further broaden our knowledge
- Further members from the community have joined the team (12 in total)
- A villager with building trade experience has expressed a willingness to advise on works
- An analysis has begun of businesses which could be viewed as potential competitors and collaborators (including suppliers of local produce) with a community shop in Combswich.
- Appraisal of possible alternative sites has continued with the focus on the Brookside Road garage court (potential back-up option). The need to provide services and an entirely new building was viewed as difficulties and the group remains concerned that, if the shop venture were to fail, the site and buildings would have little value - as compared to the substantial asset represented by the existing shop building. Again, we will provide more details at our forthcoming meeting, including the provision of a shop location 'pro's & cons' report

SALC Fund

Cllr Parker

SALC has requested information and photographs of events that have been funded by the H&WB Grant for their website to raise the profile of how the money has been spent. Cllr Parker is Actioning.