

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on
Monday 7th July 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: Richard Barnham (Chairman), Paul Wintermantle, Claire Tydeman, Rob Hall, Paul Thomas

In attendance: S Rawle (Clerk)

2411 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Crossman and Huish

2412 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RB nominated PW. PW said he would be happy to accept the nomination. It was agreed by all that PW take the role of Vice Chair.

2413 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS

None

2414 TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM MEETING & MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD 19th May 2025

The notes of the public forum meeting and minutes of Full Council meeting previously circulated, were agreed as a correct record.

2415 MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising.

2416 REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

None received.

2417 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY PARISH COUNCIL RE HEATING OIL TANKS AT SQUIRRELS

The Chair explained that the parish council had received an anonymous letter raising concerns to the storage of tanks in the garden of Squirrels. Simon Freegard was in attendance. The Chair invited Mr Freegard to speak in response to the anonymous letter that had been received. He said that they were good condition second hand tanks that come and go on a regular cycle. He assured the committee that there was no environmental risks.

In response to a question the Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had no authority to prohibit the storage of oil tanks in a private garden. The Chairman declared that there was no further action to take and the matter was closed.

2418 PLANNING

6/26/25/002 – Croydon Hall, Rodhuish – Change of use from class C2 (residential) to Class C1 (hotel). As per additional information 10.2.09, without complying with condition 8 (covered accommodation) and 9 (use of fireworks) of approved application 6/26/08/11

The Clerk reported that the application had been withdrawn. Cllr Thomas said that it was likely a further application would be submitted with just the removal of condition 8, covered accommodation.

2419 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Highways sub group – Cllr Barnam had attended the Highways sub group meeting. Chaired by Brenda Maitland-Walker. He said that he wanted to highlight how the road repair at Higher Rodhuish had been dealt with and in particular the lack of communication. The job had not been finished to a satisfactory level and the bank was in danger of collapsing once there was significant rainfall. Somerset Council have now put in black and white posts as a visibility warning. The view was that they were made of plastic and flimsy materials and would not last long.

Cllr Thomas reported that the historic sign post in the grass triangle at Lower Rodhuish farm had been taken out by a scaffolding van. Clerk asked to contact Highways and Exmoor National Park (historic sign post project) to bring to their attention.

Enhanced Highways Pilot – The Clerk referred to information that had been circulated from Somerset Council detailing how the Enhanced Highways Maintenance Pilot would work. The scheme allows parish and town councils to carry out some basic routine highways maintenance tasks over and above the statutory level the Council provides by either buying additional services or undertaking the works themselves through a volunteer network. Volunteers would need to have undertaken basic highway maintenance training provided by Somerset Council and the Parish Council would need to apply for a licence. This was not a replacement service; Somerset Council would still carry out highways maintenance as part of their statutory responsibilities. Councillors discussed the pilot project and highlighted the importance of gulleys and drain clearance in the parish. This would still need to be carried out by Highways. It was felt that the current clearing of gulleys was not up to a standard to make a difference. Cllr Hall said that he had observed a work team clearing gulleys and dumping the mud and detritus on the side of the road. This would simply be washed back into the gully/drain during the next rainfall. The Clerk had requested a current road sweeping schedule for the parish and had been informed that Somerset Council were still trying to get the information from contractor Id Verde.

20 mph speed signs – Somerset Council would need to carry out a consultation exercise before making an application to classify the road through the parish as an enforceable 20 mph zone. There was discussion about the parish council putting in place their own signage. Cllr Tydeman said that some Parish Councils had done this. Clerk to investigate signage.

H bar application, Lower Street – Clerk was asked to chase this up.

Large vehicles - Cllr Barnham said he would like to see businesses communicating with lorry drivers about the one way system and 4m height restriction.

2420 TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts for payment were approved:-

1. Clerks Salary (April-June)

£981.45

2. HMRC

£154.25

Proposed by RB and seconded by CT, agreed by all payment for Clerks salary April to June 2025 and payment to HMRC for Clerks PAYE.

The remaining payments were approved on block. Proposed by RB and seconded by Paul Wintermantle, agreed by all to approve the following payments:-

3. Rapid House	£24.00
4. L Constable (Playground Inspection Report)	£130.00
5. British Heart Foundation (Defibb Replacement Battery)	£280.00

2421 PLAY INSPECTION REPORT

The annual play inspection had been carried out. An adjustment to the level of the toddler swing was required. Clerk will contact Darren to discuss and to also to remind him to address the entrapment risk between the roof supports.

The Clerk had asked the play inspector about the pooling of water at the bottom of the slide. Although, drilling a small hole in the base may help, this would likely invalidate any warranty on the equipment. The Clerk advised that it was not a risk that the parish council should take. Clerk will circulate the report to Cllrs.

2422 MEMORIAL BENCH

The Clerk had previously circulated information and sizing of the benches that the parish council owned in various locations. Cllr Thomas would measure the space available and let the Clerk know before ordering.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed _____
CHAIRMAN

Date _____