

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7.00pm

These minutes are draft until approved at the next Full Council meeting.

PRESENT

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

In attendance: S Rawle (Clerk)

Public Forum

There were 11 members of the public present.

The Chairman opened the public forum.

Report from Somerset Council Ward Member Cllr Strom.

Highways - SC will be submitting a bid to the Government's Structures Fund for a £30-40M scheme to re-open the B3191.

National Emergency Briefing – This film is about climate change and some of the consequences of what is predicted to happen to our weather. The film can be downloaded online at www.nebriefing.org/peb. Town and parish councils are encouraged to host local screenings.

Public Health – Free NHS health check for adults 40-74 who don't already have certain health conditions. Check looks at circulatory and vascular health.

Smoking and Vapes Act 2026 became law on 29/4/26.

SC has received £22.6M from the Government over three years to support residents facing financial hardship. Citizens Advice Somerset has been appointed to lead the scheme, to provide crisis payments, debt advice, budgeting support and employment guidance. Residents can apply via citizensadvisesomerset.org.uk or by calling 0808 278 7842

Record 99% of Somerset children get primary school of their choice, starting their new schools in September 2026.

20 mph consultation results and feedback

The Chairman provided a brief overview of the consultation and why the parish council had carried out the exercise. He said that in previous public forums residents had expressed a desire to a speed limit introduced. Initial conversation with Somerset Council Traffic Management Department had indicated a cost to the Parish Council of at least £6,000 to apply for a new traffic regulation order. As the Parish Council did not have sufficient reserves, the funding would need to be precepted, which would result in an additional charge of around £80 on an average Band D council tax bill. Because of the cost implications to parishioners the Parish Council had made the decision to run a consultation during April. Out of 115 hand delivered consultation forms, 44 replies were received. The results were as follows:

25 against

15 for

2 neither yes or no

The Chairman opened the floor to questions and comments from members of the public in attendance. He said that a decision would be taken in the formal part of the meeting.

Questions were asked about the cost and why was this so high. Some parishioners were concerned about the lack of enforcement if a speed limit was introduced. Others felt strongly that a 20mph speed limit would make the village safer.

In response to comments the Chairman said that the primary reason for the parish council not introducing a speed limit before was because of the cost and concerns over enforcement. He said that most people did not drive excessively. Some of the larger vehicles could be a problem, but this was because of the size/height as opposed to speed.

Cllr Strom explained about the SID devices and effectiveness in collecting data. It was noted that a SID could only be installed if there was a speed limit in place.

A question was asked about timeframe if the Parish Council were to go ahead. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council would not be able to precept for additional funds until 2027, and it was not until then that an application could be made. Somerset Council would need to apply for the new order and carry out their own consultation so the project could take up to 2 years.

There were further suggestions from the floor about the introduction of other measures such as 'please drive carefully through our village' sign. Cllr Tydeman said that 'pedestrians in road' signage could also be installed and 'slow' markings on the road, without a cost to the Parish Council. These suggestions were met with a positive response from those in attendance.

With no further comments or suggestions the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and said that a final decision would be made at the Council meeting.

The public forum closed at 7.46pm.

The Chairman opened the Full Council meeting.

2481 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2026/27

Cllr Crossman nominated Cllr Barnham. Cllr Barnham said that he would be happy to continue in the role of Chairman. There were no further nominations. Cllr Barnham was duly elected as Chairman for the 2026/27 municipal year. Cllr Barnham signed the acceptance of office form in the presence of the Clerk and other Councillors.

2482 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2026/27

Cllr Crossman nominated Cllr Tydeman. Cllr Tydeman said that she would be happy to take the role as Vice Chair. There were no further nominations. Cllr Tydeman was duly elected as Vice Chair.

2483 APOLOGIES

Cllr Wintermantle

2484 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLER

Cllr Barnham introduced Coralie Ward who had expressed an interest in being co-opted onto the Parish Council. On the proposal of Cllr Barnham seconded by Cllr Crossman, all agreed that Coralie Ward be co-opted onto the Parish Council. The acceptance of office form was signed in the presence of the Clerk and other Councillors. Cllr Ward participated in the rest of the meeting.

2485 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS & DISPENSATION ON ANY AGENDA ITEM

Cllr Barnham declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 11.

2486 TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM MEETING & MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD 4th MARCH 2026.

RESOLVED: The notes of the public forum meeting and minutes of Full Council meeting held on the 4th March 2026, were agreed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

2487 MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING IF NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA ITEMS

Combe Lane Bin – The Clerk circulated information of a full size litter bin for Combe Lane. The Clerk asked if thought could be given to where the bin would be sited, so she could inform Id Verde Cllr Crossman happy to take delivery of the bin. Clerk to arrange purchase.

2488 20MPH CONSULTATION

The comments from members of the public in the public open forum and the results of the consultation were considered and debated by Councillors. There was unanimous view that the Parish Council should not apply for a 20mph speed limit on the grounds of cost and lack of enforcement. In addition, there was a unanimous view that other low cost alternatives could be put in place.

RESOLVED: Cllr Crossman proposed that the Parish Council do not apply for a 20mph speed limit in the parish and that in response to parishioner's views, the Parish Council apply to Somerset Council for the installation of alternative options, to include:

1. 'Slow' road markings
2. Pedestrians in road signage
3. Drive carefully through our village signage

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Barnham, and unanimously agreed.

Cllr Barnham wished to schedule an extra ordinary meeting to discuss in detail the desired locations for signs and road markings. Councillors agreed. A meeting was scheduled for 3rd June, 2026.

2489 HIGHWAY UPDATES

The end of the road turning of the A39 had been repaired. White lines still to be re-instated. It was remarked that the lines at the end of West Street needed re-marking. Clerk to follow up.

2490 PLANNING

No decisions registered or received since last meeting. Noted.

2491 CONSIDERATION OF MEMORIAL HALL & ACCOUNTS

Cllr Barnham had circulated the Memorial accounts. The grant from the Parish Council last year had prevented the Memorial Hall falling into deficit. He invited questions and requested the accounts form part of the minutes. There were no questions.

2492 FINANCES

Budget Monitoring

The Clerk presented the income and expenditure report up to 31st March 2026. The report was noted. She pointed out that the revenue account had closed with a surplus of £2964.

The reserves held at 31 March 2026 was noted.

2493 ANNUAL INSURANCE PREMIUM

The annual premium from Zurich had been received. The Clerk had tested the market and researched other quotes. Zurich were still the most competitive and she reported that there had been no issues with Zurich and they had always been very helpful. The current 3 year agreement had expired and she had requested a quote based on a further 3 year agreement. A 3 year agreement was often slightly cheaper. Inflationary price increases would still apply. Once received she would circulate to Councillors. The Parish Councils current insurance expired on the 31st May 2026 and a new agreement needed to be in place by 1st June 2026.

2494 TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts for payment were approved:-

1. Somerset Association of Local Councils (Affiliation Fee 2026/27)	£133.63
2. Withycombe Memorial Hall (Hall Hire)	£120.00
3. Withycombe Memorial Hall (Grant 2026/27)	£2,500.00
4. Rapid House (Payroll)	£31.38

Urgent Payments already made since March meeting, authorised by Chairman.

1. S Rawle (Clerks Salary Q4 Jan-March)	£954.16
2. HMRC (Tax on Clerks Salary)	£224.00
3. Exmoor Printers (Printing, 20 mph consultation)	£120.00

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Barnham, seconded by Cllr Thomas to pay the accounts as listed and note the urgent payments already made. All agreed.

2495 PLAY AREA/COMMUNITY AREA

Play area inspection would be scheduled for June. Clerk to organise.

2496 CAR PARK

Installation of Lighting – An email from Rob Jackson had been received and circulated to Councillors. There would be a requirement to keep any lighting scheme sympathetic to the Dark Skies Reserves area that the car park was located within. Cllr Ward said that she felt the Dark Skies reserve should be turned into a positive instead of the installation of lighting. It was agreed not to pursue the installation of lighting. Clerk to update Rob Jackson.

2497 MEETING DATE TO RECEIVE FINAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT FOR 2026

3rd June 2026

2498 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 3rd June 2026

Wednesday 8th June 2026

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed _____

Date _____

CHAIRMAN

DRAFT