

# WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 at 7.00pm**

## **PRESENT**

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

In attendance: S Rawle (Clerk)

## **Public Forum**

There were 12 members of the public present. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Kravis and Strom, Police and Magna Housing.

The Chairman opened the public forum. He said that he was aware the majority of the public were in attendance in relation to agenda item 6, and the on-going anti social behaviour and disruption in the village. He explained that the parish council had no enforcement powers but would endeavour to liaise with the relevant agencies to bring about action in resolving the situation. He said that Magna, Police and the 2 Somerset Councillors had been invited to the meeting but all were unavailable.

Members of the public informed Councillors of the anti social behaviour and constant disturbances they had endured over the last 2 years. Examples included, high speed driving of a defective vehicle through the village at all times of the day and night, domestic disturbances at all times of the day and night including arguments and shouting in the early hours. Suspected drug dealing at the property. Those directly affected had individually contacted the Police and logged incidents. Residents said they were disappointed and frustrated with the lack of response from the Police and other agencies including the housing provider Magna.

In relation to the speeding through the village, one resident said that they had been informed by the Police that they could do nothing because there was no speed limit through the village. It was asked whether the parish council would consider looking into a 20 mph speed limit. The Chair said that Councillors would be discussing the 20mph speed limit later in the agenda.

One resident described how they and others feared for their own safety and that of others considering the elderly residents in the village and young children. There was also concern about the welfare of the children living in the property. Magna housing had been alerted and there was no response.

One resident had made an official complaint to the Police. They said that this was categorised as a stage 1 response; after 30 days a stage 2 complaint could be logged if it was felt the first response was unsatisfactory.

Cllr Barnham encouraged residents to keep a specific log of all incidents. Cllr Crossman advised that residents should log all individual incidents with the Police and then follow it up to the Chief Constable, Police & Crime Commissioner and Rachel Gilmour MP. The number of individual complaints carried more weight than one single organisation making a complaint. He also stressed that it needed to be your own personal evidence and not that of others. Cllr Barnham said that residents should also make their own individual complaints to Magna.

Anytime that there was concern about the safety of the individuals in the property, ring 999.

In summing up Cllr Barnham said that he felt the parish council should write to the Rachel Gilmour MP and the Police & Crime Commissioner complaining of the lack of action.

**2435 APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Kravis and Strom.

**2436 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS**

None

**2437 TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM MEETING & MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD 8th September 2025**

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

**2438 MATTERS ARISING**

None arising other than that already on the agenda.

**2439 REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS**

A report had been received via email from Cllr Kravis. Councillors expressed disappointment that there was not representation from Somerset Council. Councillors also felt that the reports should have greater emphasis on West Somerset matters.

**2440 MEADOW COTTAGES**

Councillors expressed disappointment that there had been no representation from Somerset Council, Police & Magna for the meeting. The points raised in the public open forum were deeply concerning and it was felt that as community representatives, parish councillors would endeavour to do all they could within their remit to engage the various agencies to bring action in ending the disturbances in the village. It was agreed to schedule an extra-ordinary meeting as soon as possible and to invite the Police, Somerset Councillors, Magna and Rachel Gilmour to attend. Proposed Cllr Crossman, seconded Cllr Wintermantle. Agreed by all.

**2441 HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

H bar application, Lower Street – The Clerk had received an email from the Traffic Engineer regarding the application to install H bar markings on Lower Street to prevent inappropriate parking. Somerset Council had a policy that they no longer put down advisory H-bars to address parking problems, to protect a single private access to the highway. The Parish Council had been advised that if a physical obstruction is taking place and no parking instructions are present, if evidence is gained then it is a matter for the Police.

20 mph speed signs – Further information had been received from the Traffic Engineer as to the process for installing a 20mph zone through Withycombe. The Clerk explained that there was a substantial cost as it required applying and putting in place a Traffic Regulation Order and signs. It was envisaged that a scheme in Withycombe would be in the region of £5k-£10k. Some other options had been suggested. Installation of a SLOW marking on the road with warning signs at the start of the Withycombe village name sign, pedestrians in carriageway warning sign or warning of farm traffic. Another possible option available in addition to the warning signs, would be to obtain a fresh re-design of the village sign for Withycombe with the message underneath “Please Drive Slowly”.

Councillors discussed the options at length. Councillors acknowledged that the 20mph speed limit was something that residents wanted, however, the cost would require a rise in the precept requested by the parish council which would result in an increase in council tax bills. Cllr Tydeman suggested that it would be a good idea to undertake a consultation in the village so that residents were aware of the cost implications before making a final decision. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chairman would request a more precise figure for the implementation of a scheme and look at the cost implications on parishioners. Proposed by Cllr Wintermantle, seconded by Cllr Tydeman. All in favour.

#### **2442 FINANCES**

Bank reconciliation - The bank reconciliation up to the end of August was agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Wintermantle. All in favour. The bank reconciliation statement was signed by the Chairman.

The budget report and reserves position was noted.

Budget Reporting – Cllr Crossman reminded Councillors of the need to periodically transfer funds from general reserves to the earmark reserves funds for asset maintenance and the car park/play area. The Clerk suggested that a decision could be made at the March meeting, at which time the level of surplus/deficit on the general fund would be clearer. The budget report was noted.

#### **2443 TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The following accounts for payment were approved:-

1. Clerks Salary (July – September)	£961.45
2. HMRC (tax on Clerks salary)	£224.00
3. Rapid House Solutions (payroll Quarter 2)	£24.00

Proposed by Cllr Wintermantle, seconded by Cllr Thomas to pay the accounts as listed. All agreed.

#### **2444 DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27**

A budget working group was set up comprising of Cllrs Wintermantle, Tydeman & Hall. Clerk to organise first meeting.

#### **2445 PROVISION OF BINS/DOG BINS**

The Clerk reported that installation of a waste bin collection in Combe Lane would be at a cost of around £150 per year. This would be a fortnightly collection as was the dog waste bin in the car park area. The cost of a bin would be approximately £150. This would need to be purchased and installed by the parish council. Cllr Tydeman asked if Somerset Council could be asked if they would install a bin at their own cost. The Clerk would do that. It was proposed by Cllr Barnham, seconded by Cllr Tydeman to purchase a bin and liaise with Id Verde to set up a fortnightly collection service. All in favour.

**2446 COMMUNITY DE-FIB TRAINING**

The Clerk reported Envince training had previously carried out the community de-fibrillator training for the parish. The training offered comprised of either 30 minutes or 2 hour long sessions. Donations were requested rather than payment. Councillors thought it would be a good idea to undertake a repeat of the training that had been provided when the de-fibrillator was first installed. Cllr Crossman thought that a suitable time would be when the evenings were later. It was agreed to look at scheduling an event around April time.

**2447 DATE OF MEETINGS 2026/27**

The meeting dates for 2026/27 were agreed.

**2448 REQUEST FROM REGAL THEATRE FOR GRANT**

The Clerk had received a request for a grant from the Regal Theatre. She reminded Councillors that the Parish Council did not have a policy for grants. Cllr Barnham said that sometime ago the Parish Council had agreed that they would not make grants to organisations outside of the Parish. It was proposed by Cllr Barnham, seconded by Cllr Wintermantle that the application be turned down. All in favour.

**2449 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12<sup>th</sup> January 2026

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIRMAN