

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the ordinary meeting of Winsford Parish Council held on Monday 23rd February 2026 at 19.00 pm in Winsford Village Hall

Present: Councillors Colin Wilkins (CW) - Chair, Kevin Connell (KC), Ian Brooks (IB), Mike Hillier (MH), Sarah Little (SL), Sam Winzer (SW) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY). Somerset Councillors Steven Pugsley (SP) and Frances Nicholson (FN) attended part of the meeting.

Also present: Mr Harding and Mr Brown representing The George Joyce Trust

CW opened the meeting at 19.00.

90.1 Public Question Time: None

90.2 Apologies for non-attendance: Cllr Bryany Neal

90.3 Declaration of Interests: CW re item 90.5c

90.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 26th January, and any outstanding actions: The minutes were approved as a true record, Proposed SW, seconded MH. CW fed back that he is waiting for a response from the Exmoor National Park planning team re the planning status for land at Darby's Knapp, and the planning record re drainage arrangements for the 'new' houses which were built in Halse Lane. IB, MH and CW confirmed that the salt bins and bags which had been reported as empty/low have been filled.

SP and FN arrived at 19.04

90.5 Planning Matters:

a. Application No: EXM/26/043/FULL

Location: Great Nurcott Farm Nurcott Lane Winsford Dulverton Minehead TA24 7HR

Proposal: Proposed reinstatement of shed.

Councillors discussed the plans which they had viewed prior to the meeting. It was noted that the shed has fallen into disrepair/fallen down. It was also noted that the applicant had provided sufficient information in support of the application, and the decision was made to support the application as an improvement to the property.

b. Application No: EXM/26/044/LBC

Location: Great Nurcott Farm Nurcott Lane Winsford Dulverton Minehead TA24 7HR

Proposal: Listed building consent for the proposed reinstatement of shed

As above

c. Application No: EXM/26/005/TCA

Location: Bridge Cottage Exford Road Winsford Dulverton TA24 7JE

Proposal: Works to trees in a conservation area: To prune 2no. trees in the front garden.

During the discussion which took place MH and IB confirmed that the works have been carried out previously, and that it is likely that it will

need to be carried out on a bi-annual basis. It was agreed to support this application.

90.6 Updates from Somerset Councillors: SP mentioned that work is continuing on setting a budget for Somerset Council. There have been regular communications with the appropriate Government ministers and Somerset are awaiting a response with regard to gaining permission for some devolution and sale of assets. The Government have agreed to support with meeting 90% of the costs of some accumulated overspend re the High Needs part of the Special Educational Needs budget (the majority of authorities have also needed to overspend in this area). Changes announced by the Government today re funding for SEND will contribute towards dealing with these overspends as well as bringing in further changes from 2028. Concern was raised that services such as Adult Social Care are still being funded locally rather than centrally by the Government, causing immense and ongoing pressure to County budgets, with the knock on effect of parish and town councils potentially needing to take on some costs, as previously presented by the Highways team.

Rapid progress has been made with the repair works on the A396 at Cutcombe Hill. It was agreed that Kali Martin and his team have done outstanding work in planning and executing these works, and the communications around it have been excellent too and much appreciated. Further work has been identified near Timberscombe and work has begun already on this.

90.7 Update re plans for the Car Park reconstruction: CW has been in communication with Mr Thurlow at Exmoor National Park. He has circulated the latest version of the plan to councillors for their consideration. Mr Thurlow is aiming to resurface the area, to install a small 'kerb' to delineate the area from the highway, and to find a way to protect the grassy areas. The benches could remain in situ. CW raised the issue of signage with him, e.g. 'no overnight parking', and Mr Thurlow is hoping to be able to arrange that using the ENPA team. This all relies on grant funding of approximately £10,000 and at the moment it is '50/50' whether that will be allocated. IB raised the issue of ongoing maintenance once this work has been carried out and it would appear that Somerset County would not wish to be involved and that cost is likely to fall to the Parish Council, in which case efforts would be made to register the land as belonging to the Parish Council if they would be taking financial responsibility for it. It was pointed out that the Parish Council already meets the costs of the maintenance to some degree with the mowing and river clearance costs.

CW will invite Mr Thurlow to visit the village one day, to meet with any councillors who wish to discuss this further, for example to point out where the school bus usually pulls in.

90.8 To consider Highways Matters

a. Halse Lane: Improvements have been noted since the works recently carried out by the Highways team, but there is still some water coming onto the road. MH mentioned that this could do with some further work such as sealing it with concrete, and mentioned that it is more of a problem in the winter as it tends to dry up over the summer months and that would be the best opportunity to assess how to complete the work.

It was hoped that the bags will be removed as they are messy and an eyesore.

- b. Any Other Business:** It was noted that potholes which are reported on the portal do get dealt with, usually within a month. SP mentioned that the team who deal with signage on the highways have understood the issue for Halse Farm campsite and are on board with updating the existing signage at White Cross, however it is likely to be after the beginning of the new financial year. Mr Brown confirmed that the current arrangements have had a negative impact so all were in agreement that it is good news that the works will now take place.

SP and FN left the meeting at 19.37

90.10 George Joyce Charity Trust; discuss the appointment of a new Trustee:

CW and Mr Harding explained that the Trust was set up in 1652 with the farmhouse and 126 acres of land being left to the Trust with the arrangement that they would keep it lived in and used as a farm, with a proportion of the profits being then distributed between the parishes of Winsford, Wootten Courtenay and Cutcombe. Each parish nominates three Trustees who meet throughout the year with the board, which includes a land agent, re farm occupation and management. They then nominate representatives within each parish who will be responsible for distributing the profits to those meeting the given criteria.

Mr Harding is soon to retire from his voluntary Trustee position. The Trustees (Mr Hayes, Mr Harding and Mr Brown) have discussed his replacement and approached Mr Ted Williams from Copleham who would be happy to take his place. They feel it is a big responsibility, and he has a strong agricultural background so they felt he would be very suitable. The Parish Councillors agreed to support this proposal. CW thanked Mr Harding for his dedication, time and commitment to the role over the years on behalf of the parish, and Mr Brown was also thanked for the time he gives to this charity trust, and was invited to speak at the Annual Meeting. KC asked if the accounts are available for view which they are, and they will arrange for them to be made available at the end of the financial year.

Mr Harding and Mr Brown left the meeting at 19.52

90.9 Finance: To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due:

Current working balance (excluding ringfenced funds and uncleared cheques) is £3,719.87. Payments were agreed for Mr Little for Salt Bin/Bag clearance and maintenance £70, and payment for the Christmas Tree £96. CW reminded the Council that the precept will be paid in two instalments this year.

90.11 Winsford Village Green Trust;

- a. Finance Report:** Balances; Current Account £1,598.88, Deposit Account £1,818.86. No payments to be made.
- b. Any Other Business:** The fence was mentioned again. SL will aim to speak with the new landowner about plans for this. KC questioned whether the accounts could be published annually. It was agreed that this would be good practice going forward and JY will complete this work after the end of the financial year. IB has been contacted by Russell Play checking that their installation of the swings on the Village

Green is still in good condition and he was able to give them good feedback.

90.12 Correspondence and Emails received: CW was copied in on a letter sent to the Recreation Association about some dangerous trees on their land, near the river in particular. One appears to have fallen into the river and is difficult to access for clearance. The correspondent recommended reporting one tree to the National Grid as it would be their responsibility. WRA will be discussing this issue at their next meeting.

90.13 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended: MH attended a Flood Mary training session. Good practice for home owners was shared, with the emphasis on being prepared and how this can minimise damage from flooding in their properties. One useful tip that was shared was the use of aluminium tape to seal around doors as it can help to hold back flood water. Flood doors can now be installed in Listed Buildings. It is now possible to fit self closing air bricks, and a cream can be acquired which when applied to outer walls helps to deter seepage. MH will be carrying out an inventory of the equipment in the resilience store shortly and will arrange for the purchase of some aluminium tape to add to the resources available in the event of an emergency.

90.14 Any Other Business: CW will purchase a keysafe for the village hall. MH will raise the issue of the 'place of safety' status agreed with the village hall committee, and their responsibility for applying for this next time the committee meet.

MH will check the noticeboard but does feel that the extraordinary rainfall accompanied by ongoing Easterly winds would account for the recent leakage.

90.15 Items for Next Agenda: Appoint a new signatory for the bank accounts. April agenda George Joyce and Village Green Trust accounts

90.16 Date of Next meeting – Monday 30th March 2026 at 7.00 in Winsford Village Hall

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 20.20.