

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the ordinary meeting of Winsford Parish Council held on Monday 29th June 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) and Bryany Neal (BN).

Somerset Councillor Steven Pugsley attended the first part of the meeting.

One member of the public attended the full meeting, another attended part of the meeting.

CW opened the meeting at 19.08

94.1 Public Question Time: None

94.2 Apologies for non-attendance: Councillors Sam Winzer and Frances Nicholson and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY)

94.3 Declaration of Interests: None

94.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 26th May 2026, and any outstanding actions: Minutes approved, proposed MH, seconded IB. CW has talked to Kali Martin about completing the work at Yellowcombe Leat by sealing around the end of the pipe with concrete while we have dry weather. The information re salt bags and bins was all submitted prior to the LCN meeting and thanks were given to IB for his work on this. The bins/bags and signs have been strimmed around by the council. The pothole on the Ash Lane side of the ford has been repaired. Although the manhole cover in that area has sunk it has been judged by the Highways team to not yet be deep enough for repair. SL mentioned a new pothole in the ford so there are now two. CW mentioned he has spoken to the local highways engineer and that it does seem he checks the area regularly. It does appear that some of the cars have been moved at Edbrooke which has improved safety, but this does need monitoring. It would appear that there is one, and possibly two, abandoned vehicles on the car park. One is not taxed.

94.5 Report from Somerset Councillors: There was a recent Exmoor National Park staff to the parish and thanks were given to CW for attending. It was seen as a very useful visit, particularly for the planning team giving them the opportunity to view outcomes following previous planning decisions. IB brought up the recent communications re proposed changes to Somerset bus services and the fact that a new franchise system is likely to be introduced in Taunton and other towns first and rural areas will be considered later. SP pointed out that at this time it should not largely affect this area at this time but to monitor this. He expressed the view that it is vital for the service to be used in order for it to be continued, but as the current provision can be somewhat unreliable and infrequent it is understandable that the bus service is not heavily used. Also, that often people from this parish may wish to travel into Devon for South Molton or Barnstaple so the Somerset bus service is not helpful for that. Linkage with Devon services would help to encourage users. He mentioned that it may be helpful for the parish councillors to have an awareness of usage by local people.

- 94.6 To consider Highways Matters:** Some updates given in item 94.4. MH mentioned that the bridge parapet at the bottom of Upcott Lane has been damaged and he will report it on the portal. Openreach are carrying out a lot of cable work in the area with very little or no notice, and it is anticipated that this will continue for some time. Discussions are taking place at ENPA re cutting back vegetation from the sides of the road on Winsford Hill following injuries to livestock. The drains near Mr and Mrs Mileham's house do not yet appear to have been cleared and need to be re-reported. They are very overgrown, and badly blocked. MH will take photos and follow up with a report on the portal. There is a tree trunk in the water near Nethercott, discussion took place with regard to riparian responsibility with regard to this. IB will follow up.
- 94.7 Update re the website and email upgrades:** The website has now been changed to winsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk and there is a redirect on the old address. The next step is to set up the gov.uk email addresses. The old gmail address will stay live until for at least a year to give time for users such as IDVerde to update their contact details for the Parish Council.
- 94.8 Finance:**
- a. To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due:** Payments were agreed for IDVerde (who empty the dog and litter bins) £703.56, Netwise (website and email providers) £528 and N.Edwards for car park maintenance £130. Proposed IB, seconded KC.
 - b. To agree the annual AGAR return:** Deferred to next meeting due to clerk illness.
- 94.9 Winsford Charitable Trust:**
- a. Financial Report:** Balances at 29th June; Current account £1,781.60, deposit account £1,833.22. Payment was agreed for N.Edwards £130 for Village Green Maintenance. Proposed KC, seconded BN.
There are plans to clear the river as in previous years, it has usually been done in August but it is quite overgrown and this may be brought forward to July as this would contribute to problems if there was a flash flood. MH will coordinate this.
 - b. AOB:** Mr Harding was invited to speak following up on his offer to re-lay the skittle alley concrete. He had recently attended an event on the Green and found it difficult to play on. He is keen to support one of the last outdoor alleys in the area. His company would be willing to carry out the work free of charge, as part of their local charitable work, if the Village Green Trust would be willing to pay for the costs of the materials, estimated as being under £1,000. Work would include taking out the current alley and start it again aiming for a brush effect finish not a completely smooth finish. Discussion took place regarding the current condition of the alley, and how it could benefit from improvements, including discussion re health and safety implications of leaving it or upgrading it. The discussion also covered how long the current alley would be viable for if left. The work would mean the Green was not accessible for two days. It was agreed by all to accept this proposal, CW will write to confirm.

94.10 Correspondence and Emails received including flood resilience fund

email: Information has been received regarding the flood resilience fund which has been devolved to Somerset from the Government. It was noted that it is very unlikely that our area will benefit as the focus will be on areas which flood frequently such as the Levels, and that following work that has taken place on the river flooding does appear to be reduced. This will be monitored going forward.

94.11 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended: BN attended the recent Recreation Committee meeting. There have been resignations from two of the main fundraising organisers and they are actively seeking new Trustees. The tennis courts are being regularly used but will need refurbishing soon but this will be very expensive to do. CW attended the recent LCN meeting. A presentation was given by Exmoor Young Voices who support young local people encouraging and supporting them to stay in the area. They are supporting the self build approach for young local families and can offer advice. They are aiming to set up a children's play area locally, probably in Luccombe. They organise an annual fun day for young people during the Summer, usually held in Exford. There was also a talk from Sue Applegate re local public rights of way. There are now four wardens who are aiming to ensure all footpaths and bridleways are in good condition and are updating signage, selling off the old fingerposts to raise funds.

94.12 Any Other Business: BN has done a lot of work on identifying the best deal for a replacement defibrillator cabinet and has shared her recommendation with the Councillors. She was thanked for her hard work and the order will be confirmed at the next meeting. Two Ann Le Bas pictures gifted to the Village Hall Committee by the Parish Council will be passed to JY following the meeting to be taken for framing using funds from the remaining Ann Le Bas bequest fund. CW mentioned that the local police officer has attended the village on two occasions recently so that local people can meet with her and carry out bike marking etc.

94.13 Items for Next Agenda: Defibrillator cabinet, skittle alley

94.14 Date of Next meeting Monday 27th July 2026

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 8.55.