

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the ordinary meeting of Winsford Parish Council held on Monday 30th March 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), Bryany Neal (BN) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY). Somerset Councillors Steven Pugsley (SP) and Frances Nicholson (FN) attended part of the meeting.

CW opened the meeting at 19.04.

91.1 Public Question Time: None

91.2 Apologies for non-attendance: None

91.3 Declaration of Interests: None

FN arrived at 19.06

91.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 23rd February, and any outstanding actions: CW mentioned that the salt bin in Furzehill Lane is only partially full. FN confirmed that this year the winter maintenance meeting of the LCN will be held in June rather than September to allow more time for planning for the Highways team. JY commented that the new Exmoor National Park system for submitting Parish Council planning responses directly to the website is easy to use and a good improvement. SW has received and circulated the requested information from the George Joyce charity prior to the meeting. Minutes approved – proposed KC, seconded SW. Action: CW/IB to check the salt bins prior to the meeting in June once the email comes from the County with updated maps/spreadsheets if applicable and received from the Highways team.

SP arrived at 19.14

91.5 Updates from Somerset Councillors: FN and SP confirmed the arrangements for the LCN meeting in June when the Highways Wardens can submit their winter maintenance requirements. Due to confusion last year re spreadsheets and maps it is really important to be as accurate as possible this year. The recent incident on Winsford Hill where a pony was killed by a car has reignited discussions re what can be done to improve road safety up there, as there were also incidents with cattle last year. Speed limits have been discussed but are recognised as difficult to enforce. Potentially reducing the scrub and gorse next to the road, to create more visibility if an animal is near to the road, may be an option. Particularly as the scrub and thorn has increased on the Hill over the years. Further ideas shared from other areas which have had similar problems include fitting the livestock with reflective collars. The reduced speed limit in the New Forest did work initially but is hard to enforce and it does appear that in general average vehicle speed has increased above the limit. FN pointed out that it would be very beneficial to keep a record of all reported incidents on that stretch of highway to support the need for changes should they be required. Any actions would need to be agreed with the landowner/s. SL mentioned that there appeared to be an increased police presence in the area but nobody was aware of a reason for this.

91.6 To consider Highways Matters:

- a. **Halse Lane Drainage:** Re the 'new' development the plans are no longer available so it has been suggested that perhaps the builder could be approached to see what arrangements may have been made re drainage. However, the flooding in Halse Lane has been improved by the works that were carried out, although MH suggested that the pipe could benefit from being concreted in to complete the work. The drain at the bottom of the hill has also been improved so overall there are fewer problems for Halse Lane.
- b. **Any Other Business:** Most potholes have been repaired once reported. One not yet done has been highlighted with paint so it is likely to be dealt with soon. The works to the traffic lights at the bottom of Dunster Steep are very nearly complete. The roadworks at Timberscombe will need a partial road closure, the date is not available as yet.

FN/SP left the meeting at 19.34

91.7 Update re Winsford Car Park: A meeting has been arranged for 8th April with Mr Thurlow from Exmoor National Park. His plans have been circulated by CW to all Parish Councillors so they have the opportunity to prepare questions and comments. IB raised the issue of ongoing ownership of the Car Park following the proposed repairs are carried out. This could potentially become the responsibility of the Parish Council, with all maintenance also becoming their responsibility. KC mentioned that it has been discussed in the past and agreed that this would be beneficial, and CW mentioned that he views it as a strong asset for the village. However, this could be very costly and a discussion took place as to costs, liability insurance, etc. It was noted that the Parish Council already pays for the maintenance of the verges. It was clear from the discussion that whilst in principle most agreed that the Parish Council could take on this responsibility there would need to be agreements made re what types of vehicle could park there, for how long, at what cost etc. Signage was discussed, which would include making it clear that people park at their own risk, and to request that nobody sleeps in their vehicle overnight while parked there. Donations could perhaps be requested from those that use it on a very regular basis. No final decisions were made at this time as this is currently just a proposal based upon the repairs being put in place, so further discussion can take place once a date has been agreed for the works to happen if the National Park can obtain the necessary grant funding. In the meantime, an honesty box trial may be put in place to help meet the costs of mowing and any temporary signage which may be put in place as the current signs are in poor repair.

91.8 Finance;

- a. **To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due:**
Payments were agreed for JY Salary and Expenses £443.09 and Netwise website £30. Proposed KC, seconded BN
- b. **To appoint a further signatory to the accounts:** BN was nominated and accepted the role. Proposed CW, seconded MH, approved by all.
- c. **To formally agree the removal of ex councillors as signatories:**
Proposed KC, seconded SW, approved by all.

91.9 Winsford Village Green Trust:

- a. **Finance Report:** Current account £1,692.04, Reserve £1,826.
- b. **Annual Inspection:** CW will arrange for this to take place as usual. MH has kindly offered to laminate and put up the sign prepared previously by JY.
- c. **AOB:** Thanks were given to Mr Hillier who kindly organised tidying up the lane along the back of the Village Green recently, removing the waste.

91.10 Parish Council Website: JY has been communicating with the website provider with regard to the move to a gov.uk domain name as directed by the government, and has received two quotes. This will come with a gov.uk email address as well and it is recommended that for security reasons each parish councillor has a dedicated email address that is only used for council business. There is now an AGAR entry regarding this, and the requirement for the Parish Council to develop and follow an IT policy in line with assertion 10. It was agreed that JY will find out more and circulate the information before the next meeting. Furthermore, she will explore what is needed regarding dedicated email accounts and the requirements of assertion ten. It was agreed that this will be further explored at the next meeting and agree the way forward re the IT and data protection policy, email addresses and website domain change. With regard to the current website JY is aware that it is out of date and requested support in going through each page to identify what needs to be changed or added. It was suggested that councillors could offer support prior to the car park meeting on 8th April and this was agreed.

91.11 Winsford Parish Council Annual Assembly: CW will invite the speakers as usual. Mrs Mileham and Mr Harding will be invited to attend. Tea and biscuits will be offered to attendees.

91.12 Correspondence and Emails received: CW has received concerns regarding dogs in the churchyard which has been passed to the PCC. There is an ongoing concern re parking at Edbrooke and this will be passed on to Magna.

91.13 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended: JY attended the recent LCN meeting.

91.14 Any Other Business: MH has acquired the role of aluminium tape discussed at the last meeting and will put it into the resilience store. JY will purchase the new keysafe for the village hall.

91.15 Items for Next Agenda: George Joyce accounts, Annual Assembly arrangements, village car park, website.

91.16 Date of Next meeting – Monday 27th April 2026 at 7.00 in Winsford Village Hall

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 20.40.