

## WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Winsford Parish Council Held on Monday 27th January 2025, at 19.00pm in Winsford Village Hall

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Colin Wilkins (CW) – Chair, Mel Mileham (MM), Ian Brooks (IB), Mike Hillier (MH) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY).

Somerset Councillors Frances Nicholson (FN) and Steven Pugsley (SP) attended the first part of the meeting.

CW opened the meeting at 19.04

**79.1 Public Question Time:** None

**79.2 Apologies for non-attendance:** Bryany Neal, Kevin Connell and Sarah Little

**79.3 Declaration of Interests:** None

**79.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 25th November, and any outstanding actions:** MM reported that she and MH have purchased and installed lights inside the village resilience store, inside and outside the locked door, along with pegs. The next step is to confirm the village place of safety and gain the County designation sticker. It was agreed that MH will request that this is an agenda item at the next village hall meeting so that the work carried out so far can be shared, and the potential place of the village hall in the plans discussed. CW is to contact the play inspection company and JY produce the signage for the swings. SP and FN are communicating with Bill Revans with regard to ensuring that the additional needs of Exmoor Hill highways are understood and taken into account during the County budgeting phase to ensure a suitable jetting programme is in place. The minutes were agreed as a true record – proposed IB, seconded MM agreed by all.

**79.5 Discuss the School Transport Service to the Parish:** CW and FN have been working hard over the last few weeks as communications had been received by a number of local families withdrawing the service for travel to Kingsmead. Following a lot of hard work this situation has now been resolved, however going forward transport will only be provided to Minehead for secondary education. The parents affected have written to thank CW for his support on this matter.

**79.6 Updates from Somerset Councillors:** FN reported that there is no progress re the Leat in Halse Lane, but it remains on their list of things needing to be resolved. They have attended numerous other local Parish Council meetings and most are maintaining their precept at a similar level (plus up to 5%) whilst the uncertainty over the County budget remains. The County will set their budget in February as they are waiting to hear from the Government whether they can raise the Council Tax by above their 5% cap this year.

**79.7 To consider Highways Matters;**

- a. **To discuss the wall at Halse Lane:** Concern has been raised with regard to the state of the wall, and that it does appear to be deteriorating. There is still no clarification as to who owns it, but following discussion it was agreed that as it abuts the highway it is likely to be under their ownership. MM mentioned that it would also be useful to clarify the riparian owner. JY will contact the Highways team re whether they accept responsibility. SP advised that it is likely this goes back to the time when various pockets of land were gifted by the Acland family but there appear to be no clear records. The dangerous parking at Edbrooke was raised again. Traffic is pushed out across the white line on a bend. CW will contact Magna/CW that an additional salt bin has been placed, with another potentially needed. FN advised this must be added to the Salt Bin map recently agreed with the Highways team.

There is a problem with flooding at Staddon Lane – it was advised that this needs to be reported via the online system.

- b. Any Other Business:** MM has reported a number of gulleys/drains which need clearing to Paul Keele the Highways Supervisor.

FN and SP left the meeting at 20.02

**79.8 To discuss the wooden safety rail on the packhorse bridge:** It was noted that the rail is by the bridge not on it. A car has recently reversed into it and damaged it. Repairs were needed for safety reasons and CW arranged for this to take place.

**79.9 To discuss preparedness for long term power cuts in the parish:** Following the recent 38 hour power cut it is clear that the village does need a designated warm place where people can go to get hot drinks, charge their phones etc as recommended by the County Resilience Team. As agreed above this will be raised with the village hall committee. It was agreed that they would benefit from purchasing a generator for this purpose and that we can share the details for potential grants which MM recently shared from her Flood Group meeting. It is felt that the Parish Council can go no further at this time without meeting with the Village Hall committee.

**79.10 Finance:**

**a. To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due:** The following payments were agreed; JY salary Dec/Jan £152.90, JY expenses (including refund for Defib pads) £106.38, JY Tax £26.20, West Somerset Flood Group £5, MM refund for lights £18.98 and Steve Hunt (Christmas tree lights and decorations) £50.48. The payments were agreed Proposed IB, seconded CW

**b. To agree the budget and precept request for 2025-2026:** KC, CW and JY met previously to review this year's spending and propose budget allocations for 2025/26. These were agreed by all. Further discussion was held re the need for allocating funds for highways when the County budget has not yet been set. Further discussion was held re the wall by the Winn Brook and whether funds should be allocated towards repairs. It was concluded that this is a long term issue and it does not need urgent repair so the emphasis is to be on identifying ownership and liability. Taking into account the pre planning recommendations, and the advice from the County Councillors it was agreed unanimously to set the budget and precept request at £10,120 a rise of 3.58%.

**79.11 Winsford Village Green Trust**

**a. Finance Report:** Current balances at Cash £1,848.74 (including grant funds of £1,400.80) and Reserve at £1,784.34.

**b. AOB:** It was agreed that we need to source a new bin to match the new picnic benches, JY to . CW has received one quote for repairs to the skittle alley of approx. £3,000 which would require fundraising. Furthermore, he has acquired a quote for some fencing but following discussion it was felt that the homeowner is likely to be liable. CW to follow up. It was agreed that Tom Thurlow should be approached re gaining funds/grants towards repairs and maintenance on both the car park and village green as they are included in the conservation area.

**79.12 Correspondence and Emails received:** A planning application has been received since the agenda was set – for works on a beech tree at River House. This was discussed and all were in favour for the works to be carried out to safeguard the health of the tree.

An email has been received from the Henry Leigh Trust. Mr Lindop, who has represented the village so well for many years, has decided to retire. CW shared his thoughts on a possible replacement and a number of names were put forward by other councillors. The ideal candidate was agreed upon and this will be confirmed at a later date once CW has followed up. Further discussion took place re the lease at

East Nurcott as it is understood that the lease is due to be renewed in the near future, as arranged by the George Joyce Trust.

CW has been contacted re the wall by the Winn Brook (discussed earlier). He has received a complaint re the parking at Edbrooke, also discussed earlier.

**79.13 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended:** CW attended the recent LCN meeting. A talk was given by the new Police Commissioner, with the other main focus on Highways and Housing. MM attended the recent Flood Group meeting and has circulated the minutes and information about available grants that could be applied for related to resilience and preparedness within communities.

**79.14 Any Other Business:** None

**79.15 Items for Next Agenda:** None

**79.16 Date of Next meeting – February 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 7.00 in Winsford Village Hall**

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 21.09.