BISHOPS LYDEARD & COTHELSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: David Richards, 37 Stawell Road, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton TA4 3FA

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Minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held in the Village Hall, Bishops Lydeard on Wednesday 11th February 2026.

Present: Cllrs Roberts (Chair), Allen, Warmington, Bainbridge, Bletcher, Orr and Rigby and supported by David Richards (Clerk)

Absent: Cllrs Salter, Lewin-Harris, Pattemore and Hunt.

3 members of the public were present.

Agenda Item 1 – 024/26 Apologies: To receive apologies and to approve reasons for absence.

Cllr Salter sent an apology as he needed to cover a football coaching session at short notice. Cllr Lewin-Harris sent an apology as she had a prior long-standing engagement. Cllr Pattemore sent an apology due to having the flu/ cold. Cllr Hunt sent an apology due to a migraine.

The reasons for absence were accepted.

Agenda Item 2 – 025/26 Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Roberts declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in The Paper Shop – agenda item 15 invoice payments - list 2.

Agenda Item 3 – 026/26 To consider the approval of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2026.

The minutes were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting by Cllr Allen. This was seconded by Cllr Orr and received unanimous support.

Agenda Item 4 – 027/26 Comments from members of the public.

There were no comments from the members of the public in attendance.

Agenda Item 5 – 028/26 Appointment of new Clerk and initial training at a cost of £150.

Cllr Allen outlined the process that had been undertaken to recruit a new clerk. A provisional offer of employment was made to Martin Elford, the successful candidate,

with an offer of 15 hours per week at a pay scale of 18 on the Green Book with a start date of 2nd March 2026. The offer is conditional on satisfactory references which have been completed and approval by the Parish Council. It was noted that the pay scale would be reviewed after the 3-month probation period. An initial training budget was also recommended.

Cllr Allen proposed that the council approve the offer of employment and an initial training budget of £150. This was seconded by Cllr Orr and receive unanimous support.

Agenda Item 6 – 029/26 Appointment of RFO and cost of new laptop and software at a cost of £500.

Cllr Allen explained that the current clerk/RFO (David Richards) has agreed to remain in post as Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) with a start date of 2nd March 2026 and reduced contracted hours to 5 hours per week at his existing pay rate.

Cllr Allen proposed that the appointment is approved with a budget of £500 for a new laptop which will be needed. This was seconded by Cllr Warmington and received unanimous support.

Agenda Item 7 – 030/26 Confirmation of the list of sites from the Somerset Devolution team that the Parish Council would like to Express an Interest in.

Cllr Rigby explained the budget challenges that Somerset Council face and they are therefore looking for ways of making significant savings.

The two areas that are of interest and had previously been identified of interest to the Parish Council were:

1. Westbridge Way Play Area
2. Woodland Walk - the one by the A358

It was agreed that the other areas are being well maintained by Somerset Council and there would not be a benefit of devolving these to the Parish Council.

Cllr Orr proposed that Westbridge Way Play Area and the Woodland Walk are approved. This was seconded by Cllr Warmington and was unanimously approved.

Action: The clerk is to contact the Somerset Council Devolution team and confirm that the Parish Council wishes to express and interest in the Westbridge Way Play Area and the Woodland Walk - the one by the A358 area.

Agenda Item 8 – 031/26 Approval of the Developed Brief from Somerset Council for the Detailed Design of Site 14 (Cothelstone Road) at a cost of £16,996.

After some discussion Cllr Orr proposed that the Developed Brief is approved. This was seconded by Cllr Allen. The proposal was carried by a majority vote with Cllr Bainbridge voting against.

Action: The clerk is to confirm approval of the developed brief to Somerset Council.

Agenda Item 9 – 032/26 Review and approval of the MUGA Risk Assessment document.

Cllr Bletcher proposed that the MUGA Risk Assessment documents was approved. This was seconded by Cllr Rigby and received unanimous support.

Agenda Item 10 – 033/26 Approval of a Social Media Policy for the Parish Council and appointment of the moderators.

The Social Media Policy document was discussed. Cllr Bainbridge questioned the need for this policy as there is a Code of Conduct policy in place. Also, the new clerk will not have time to implement social media accounts when starting his new role.

Cllr Orr proposed that the Social Media Policy document was approved. This was seconded by Cllr Warmington. The proposal was carried by a majority vote with Cllr Allen voting against.

It was agreed that the implementation of any social media accounts can be delayed until the new clerk has time to do that. Hence, there is no need to appoint the moderators.

Agenda 11 – 034/26 Approval to request that the Village Hall fenced play area including the under 5s play area is added to the new Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order.

Cllr Allen said that the play area opposite the Village Hall is private land and there are signs indicating that dogs are not allowed. Also, it was noted there has not been a problem with dogs in this area. It was agreed that there is no need to ask for this to be added to the Public Spaces Protection Order.

It was agreed that the clerk should ask for the Westbridge Way Play Area near the station to be added to the PSPO in anticipation of the Parish Council adopting the site.

Action: The clerk is to request that the Westbridge Way Play Area near the station is added to the PSPO.

Agenda 12 – 035/26 Review of Litter and Dog Waste Bins in the village.

A full review of each litter bin and dog waste bin was completed using the paper provided. The following changes were identified:

1. A new litter bin is needed along Taunton Road. This could be situated on the grass area at the end of Mill Lane next to Taunton Road.
   Note: In addition, the clerk will request a litter bin outside the Co-op to the planning team.
2. A new litter bin is needed opposite the bus stop on Hither Mead by Mount Street. It was proposed to locate this on the grass area opposite the bus stop.
3. A new litter bin/ dog wate bin (the bin should be clearly marked for both) to be located by the footpath leading from Hither Mead by the stream. This can replace the broken/ rusty dog wate bin by the bus stop near that location.

It was agreed that the clerk will need to clarify the process to add these bins with Somerset Council.

Cllr Allen proposed that these litter bins should be provided. Cllr Orr seconded the proposal which was unanimously supported.

Action: The clerk is to clarify the process to add new litter bins on Somerset Council's land and to the schedule for emptying by Somerset Council.

Agenda Item 13 – 036/26 Planning Applications.

The following planning application was noted:

Case Ref: 06/26/0002/T Proposal: Application to carry out crown-reduction works to two oak trees and one eucalyptus tree included in Taunton Deane Borough (Bishops Lydeard No.2) Tree Preservation Order 1991 at Dunkirk Memorial House, Minehead Road, Bishops Lydeard (TD527)
Application Type: Felling of Tree(s) covered by TPO

Agenda Item 14 – 0037/26 Authorisation of Clerk's pay and expenses for February 2026 (papers).

Cllr Allen proposed that the clerk's pay for February 2026 (£1,428.00 plus £71.40 overtime, plus £162.36 Employer NI) and expenses for February 2026 (£22.49) is approved. This was seconded by Cllr Orr and approved by all.

Agenda Item 15 – 038/26 Finance.

15a – December 2025 Bank Reconciliation and Cashbook report

The Bank Reconciliation report and Cashbook reports were noted.

15b – Scribe Summary Report (actual Vs budget)

The Scribe Summary Report for 01/04/2025 to 31/12/2025 was noted.

15c - Unity Trust Bank charges for 2026

The increased Unity Trust Bank charges for 2026 were noted.

15d - To review the Public Conveniences maintenance payments

The clerk recommended that new toilet roll holder and lighting/ consumer unit payments are transferred to the Public Convenience Earmarked Reserve fund.
The result would be as follows: Maintenance for the public conveniences - Budget £300.00, Total payments to date - £478.11.
The Earmarked Reserve fund would then reduce from £41,353.00 to £31,432.89 following this change.
The Parish Council approved the change.

PAYMENTS:

Cllr Orr proposed that the invoices listed below were approved for payment. This was seconded by Cllr Warmington and approved by all.

List 1					
From:	**Number:**	**Date:**	**For:**	**£ Excl. VAT**	**£ Inc VAT**
SALC	2595	12/01/2026	Annual Governance training	£25.00	£25.00
SALC	2633	26/01/2026	Coucillor Essentials Part 2 training	£25.00	£25.00
St Mary the Virgin Church Centre		12/01/2026	Hall hire	£30.00	£30.00
Jaydee Living Ltd	92125	16/01/2026	Litter Bin	£588.95	£706.74
Bamfords	107933	23/01/2026	Emergency callout to toilets	£327.11	£392.53
ICO	012b4351250	26/01/2026	annual data protection fee	£52.00	£52.00
Scribe	INV-15403	24/01/2026	Year End Health Check	£79.00	£94.80
Somerset Council	32012900	26/01/2026	Grass cutting and bins	£1,269.09	£1,522.91
Somerset Council	32013019	27/01/2026	Library staffing for Q3	£2,776.69	£3,332.03
Pete Miller Electrical Ltd	1811	27/01/2026	Library remedial works	£607.10	£728.52
Jacks Garden Mtce	2424	01/02/2026	Lengthsman - December 2025	£893.70	£1,072.44
Fairy Dust Cleaning	0126	31/01/2026	Cleaning the Library	£135.00	£135.00
Fairy Dust Cleaning	0126	31/01/2026	Cleaning the toilets	£337.05	£337.05

Cllrs Roberts left the meeting at this point due to her declaration of interests.

Cllr Bletcher proposed that the invoice in List 2 was approved for payment. This was seconded by Cllr Warmington and approved by all.

List 2					
From:	**Number:**	**Date:**	**For:**	**£ Excl. VAT**	**£ Inc VAT**
The Paper Shop	1047-260131	31/01/2026	Newspapers	£12.91	£12.91

Cllr Roberts returned to the room.

The **Direct Debits** listed below were noted:

Direct Debits					
From:	**Number:**	**Date:**	**For:**	**£ Excl. VAT**	**£ Inc VAT**
EDF	000026462223	06/01/2026	Library Electricity	£130.64	£137.17
Bristish Gas	807175484	30/01/2026	Public Conveniences Electricity	£45.37	£47.66
Biffa	308C075393	23/01/2026	Library Waste	£152.10	£182.52

The **Bank Charge** below was noted:

Bank Charges						
From:	Number:	Date:	For:		£ Excl. VAT	£ Inc VAT
Unity Trust Bank		31/01/2026	Bank charges		£8.25	£8.25

The **Receipts** listed below were noted:

Income				
From:	Number:	Date:	For:	£
CCLA Bank	N/A	05/01/2026	Interest Payment	£1,954.69
Library Cash	BLDLIB_Banking_30	30/01/2026	Library cash	£84.06
Somerset Council	N/A	09/01/2026	Library Grant Q3	£500.00
Somerset Council	N/A	09/01/2026	Library Grant Q4	£500.00
War Memorial Trust	N/A	22/01/2026	Grant for WM restoration	£1,020.00
HMRC	N/A	26/01/2026	Q3 VAT Refund	£3,186.44

Agenda Item 16 – 039/26 Correspondence List.

The clerk provided updates on the correspondence listed in the paper provided.

Cllr Bainbridge requested that the emails relating to the War Memorial Trust reduction in grant payment is sent to all councillors and noted that this was not listed on the Correspondence List.

Action: Clerk to forward emails relating to the reduction in the grant received from the War Memorial Trust following the cleaning of the War Memorial by SSH Conservation.

Agenda Item 17 – 040/026 Somerset Council Matters.

Cllr Rigby provided an update as follows:

1. Somerset Council is in the process of finalising and approving the budget for the forthcoming year. He noted that the government has now removed the 'sparsity payment'. It is more expensive to provide services in remote areas compared to large towns and cities.
2. He met with First Bus's recently appointed operations manager where better timetables and bus stops were discussed. There was a recent complaint about the busses not being warm enough. Also, the overcrowding particularly at the start of the school year but at other time also was discussed.
3. Somerset Council has appointed a new service director for planning, and he will continue the drive to improve performance in planning. Planning enforcement complaints need to be addressed, and new enforcement officers are being recruited. It was noted that planning enforcement is a discretionary function and not a mandatory statutory duty for Local Planning Authorities.
4. The Co-op planning application has still not been approved, and he will update the council when he has more information on that.
5. Special Educational Needs and disability– the government is announcing it is relieving councils of 90% of the special educational needs and disability debts as of March 2026.

Agenda Item 18 – 041/026 Lengthman's monthly report.

Lengthman's monthly report was reviewed and noted.

It was also noted that too much time is being booked for litter picking. Also, the underpass is the responsibility of Somerset Council and not the Parish Council.

Agenda Item 19 – 042/026 Avon & Somerset Police Report.

The PCSO monthly report was reviewed and noted.

Agenda Item 20 – 043/26 Clerks Report and action tracker.

The report and action tracker were noted.

Agenda Item 21 – 044/25 To note planning permissions granted or refused.

The following planning permissions were noted:

Application number : 06/25/0030/CQ - Application for Prior Approval for proposed change of use from agricultural building to 1 No. dwelling house (Class C3) and associated building operations at Broom Farm, Dene Road, Norton Fitzwarren.
Decision of Prior Approval **Refusal** was made on 14/01/2026

Application number : 06/25/0033 - Change of use from Class A1 (shops) and A3 (restaurants and cafes) to Class B2 (general industrial) at Broadgauge Business Park, Westridge Way, Bishops Lydeard.
Decision of **Conditional Approval** was made on 27/01/2026.

Application number : 06/25/0034/T - Notification to carry out management works (removal of secondary leader) to one larch tree within Bishops Lydeard Conservation Area at 8 Mount Street, Bishops Lydeard.
Decision of **No Objection** - Trees was made on 23/01/2026.

Application number : 06/25/0035/T - Notification to fell one pine tree, one walnut and one hawthorn tree within Bishops Lydeard Conservation Area at 7 Mount Street, Bishops Lydeard.
Decision of **No Objection** - Trees was made on 23/01/2026.

Agenda Item 22 – 045/26 To note planning applications withdrawn – None.

Agenda Item 23 – 046/26 Any Other Business for report only.

Cllr Roberts identified that the Sandhill Park Woodland map areas, which had been circulated to the councillors by the clerk, need to be agreed before the searches can start. It was agreed that the maps provided were acceptable.

Cllr Bletcher noted that some kerbstones had been damaged by the contractors working at Four Acre Mead and Hither Mead. This will be reported by the clerk.

Cllr Roberts noted that the Wild Trout Trust Advisory Visit report was shared with a representative of the Environment Agency. They indicated that they may be able to help address some of the recommendations in the report.

The meeting closed at 20:50

Date of next meeting:

Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 7pm Bishops Lydeard Village Hall (new small hall).