



Barton St David

Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 28th April 2025**

Present: Cllrs S Jackson (Chair), D Rowley, E Rice, M Love and A Hicks

In Attendance: Caron Potts (Clerk), Somerset Council Councillors Tim Kerley and Stephen Page and 7 members of the public.

A G E N D A

Meeting opened at 7.30pm

1. Apologies for Absence - none

2. Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held on 29th April 2024

Confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising - none

4. Chair's Report on behalf of the Parish Council – see appendix

5. Somerset Council Councillors' Report

The Unitary Council is now in its 2nd year and this format is going to be rolled out across the country. The previous 5 years freeze on Council Tax had a major impact on the council's budget together with the significant increase in social care costs. The budget has been balanced. There is progress on the phosphate mitigation situation but the lack of 5-year land supply is still a problem. Electric buses are being introduced and some innovative solutions to SEND provision being trialed.

6. Neighbourhood Plan update

Following the excellent response to the village survey, clear directions were determined to guide the policy formation. With the help of a grant funded consultant, these policies have been drafted and are now being fine tuned by the working party before being issued for public consultation.

7. 2nd village defibrillator – do we need one and if so where?

We have been approached by a resident on Jarmany Hill regarding a second defib in the village. The British Heart Foundation recommends each defibrillator should ideally be possible to fetch within 4 minutes – 2 minutes there and 2 minutes back. Barton is a linear village which makes this recommendation hard to achieve but the consensus was at the meeting that we should have a second one. Various locations discussed – Jarmany Hill workshops, Manor Farm, Pub.

The Clerk give an estimated cost would be from £1650 for the machine and a cabinet.

This is an agenda item for the PC meeting to pick up on any actions.

8. Open Public Forum- none

Clerk to the Council: Caron Potts
Withy Lane Farmhouse, Silver Street, Barton St David, Somerton, TA11 6DD.
Email clerk@bartonstdavid.gov.uk

Appendix

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - CHAIR'S REPORT 2024-2025

1. Somerset Council Matters.

a. Somerset Council financial challenges have continued and remain, resulting in reduced services across the County, particularly in Social Care, and the increase in Council Tax. The lack of funds to address such matters as road safety, road gutter clearing and localised flooding has impacted on the Village. The impact of 'disbanding' of the 4 District Councils continues to have little impact on us. Somerset Council have continued to explore whether any Town or Parish Councils wish to take over any services – the Parish Council position remains clear that we will not volunteer for any of these until the situation becomes clearer.

b. The New Local Community Network (ours is Avalon) has been set up to bring together Parish and Town Councils in groups of about 20. The intent is to discuss and address local issues together, but it has no budget and very few staff and, to date, has not discussed or delivered anything of benefit to Barton.

2. People.

a. Maggie Love has joined the Parish Council and is leading the Highways and Traffic and Footpaths, Hedges, Environment and Trees parts of our Work Plan.

b. We also welcome Councillor Stephen Page who joins Tom Kerley as our Somerset Council representatives. Stephen lives in Keinton so knows the Village well.

c. There are still 2 vacancies for Parish Councillors – please contact the Chair or Clerk if you have a particular interest in any aspect of the Village and are interested in supporting the community and our future.

3. Financial Matters.

a. At the January 2025 Meeting, after a lot of discussion, the Parish Council, agreed to raise the Precept to £12000, equating approximately to an increase of £3 per year for a Band D house. This the first increase for some years. The reasons for the increase are:

i. To address local flooding issues and fund clearance of drains and their interconnecting pipes.

ii. To anticipate continued Somerset Council budget challenges and establish a contingency fund should the Village need to supplement any services.

iii. To prepare a fund for Village Projects that the developing Neighbourhood Plan is identifying; for example, to maintain the Village Hall.

b. Our Work Plan has been updated and funds have been allocated funds to various activities in the Budget. Further Financial Information is available on the Village Website:

<https://bartonstdavidparish.gov.uk/financial-information/>

c. Notable expenditure this year has been on clearing drains and continued support to Village activities with a number of donations, grants and payments, including: the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee, the Royal British Legion; the Parochial Church Council; the local Women's Institute; upkeep of the High Lane Bus Shelter and modernising the Village Website.

4. Planning.

a. 6 New Planning Applications have been received in the year (one more than last year); of these, the Parish Council recommended refusal of 3.

b. Somerset Council's Planning Enforcement Team have been engaged on a number of issues where the Parish Council feel that Approved Plans and process has not been followed.

5. **Work Plan.** The Work Plan, which identifies Parish Council projects and activities, has been updated and can be found on the Village Website: <https://bartonstdavidparish.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Workplan->

[September-2024-.pdf](#) Key elements of the Works Plan include: drains clearance; communication and community involvement; the Neighbourhood Plan; Infrastructure; and Asset Management.

6. **Local Flooding.** Localised flooding has continued to be a real issue this year.

- a. Following significant flooding in winter 23/24, the Parish Council funded the July 24 clearance of drains and their interconnecting pipes. Landowners have also helped by clearing their ditches and the Parish Council has started to engage other landowners. The key problem areas have been identified including the bottom of Jarmany Hill, the bottom of Peacock Hill, Mill Road and near Tootle Bridge.
- b. Baltonsborough, Butleigh, West Pennard and Barton St David Parish Council Chairs have had a number of meetings, initiated by Baltonsborough, to work together on resolving our flooding issues. As a result of these meetings, the Parish Council has engaged the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) to get their help and, hopefully, funding support to address our issues.
- c. Highways (drains) and Wessex Water (sewers) have been repeatedly engaged. Lack of Somerset Council funds has definitely impacted. Site meetings have been held with, and the areas of particular concern have been identified. The Parish Council budget will again clear drain gulleys and the joining pipes this year, and we are developing a plan to address the key areas.

7. **Neighbourhood Plan.** Work to develop our Neighbourhood Plan has continued, with updates sent out via the Village Newsletter, Parish Magazine and Village Email.

- a. 60% of houses responded to the 2024 Village Survey, with the responses forming the foundations of the Plan.
- b. The next step is to publish a draft of the Plan for everyone to be able to comment; it is planned to do this in the Summer.
- c. As a reminder, the Plan will be a legal document that developers and the Somerset Planning Authority have to take into account and will help shape the future physical development of our Village along the lines that we want as a community. The Vision for the Plan is: In the 2030s Barton St David will continue to be a safe, enjoyable Village to live in, with our own community character and natural environment, thriving local and rural businesses, and residents of all ages and abilities.

8. **Communications.**

- a. **Village Website.** The website is in the process of being updated to make it easier to use and give it a more modern, useful feel.
- b. **High Speed Broadband.** As most should be aware, Gigaclear have regrettably decided not to provide high-speed broadband to the Village. The Parish Council have been trying to get an update from Somerset Council on the next steps, but sadly have had no response – we will continue to press.
- c. The Parish Council and the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee have continued to meet twice a year to plan future budgetary needs and align future plans to the benefit of the whole Village.
- d. **New email addresses.** Following best practise recommendations, we have changed our domain name to a gov.uk prefix.

9. **Road Safety.** Somerset Council's Highway Team have at long last installed a number of signs to encourage drivers to reduce speed in dangerous parts of the Village, notably near the Barton Inn. After much consideration, the Parish Council decided by majority vote to not buy a Speed Indicator Device for use in the Village.

10. **Thanks.**

- a. As ever, a particular “thankyou” to Caron Potts our Clerk Caron for her support to the Council and her exceptional hard work.
- b. Thank you to Simon Chamberlain and Hugh Davey for their help on the local flooding issues – expert knowledge which has been invaluable. Thank you both.

c. And also to Peter Farrant for everything he continues to do for the Village, the Council and the Village Hall Committee. Thank you, Peter.

d. Finally, thanks also for those who regularly attend Council meetings and contribute, and for inputs and comments we receive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Leach', written in a cursive style.

Chair
Barton St David Parish Council