



## **LONG SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the parish council held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors Cox, (Chairman), Rousell (Vice-Chair), Coombes, Furse-Roberts, Greenfield, Pritchard and Tulk.

#### **Members of the Public: 2**

**Somerset Councillors:** Cllr Page sent his apologies.

**Meeting closed at 7.31pm**

#### **Public Questions and Observations**

David Crawshaw from the Knole Flood Group reported that the first bad weather in early December had tested the various completed projects in Knole, and everything had worked as it should. The holding pond, drains, gullies and newly installed pipe from Grove Lane to Stonemead worked well, and the slight flooding by the bridge after 12 hours of rain, went away quickly. The grant application for the final project to complete a new holding pond just north of the village at Orchard Farm is going to be re-submitted. Representatives from FWAG are visiting the village mid-January to be shown the success of the works to date, so they are optimistic of a better outcome. They are once again very grateful to the Parish Council for all their help and support.

Harry Fry asked if any signage or other information can be made available to visitors to the village to highlight footpaths and ensure that they don't go astray! He also wanted to thank the Parish Council for the gully clearing work along Langport Road which has been very effective.

The Chairman said that a welcome letter and a map showing footpaths in the village are currently being updated, and once finalised, copies can be made available in various locations around the village. Cllr Pritchard added that details of footpaths and their reference numbers can be found online at <https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map> and exploring the Rights of Way in Long Sutton. Members of the public can use this to accurately report any defects or maintenance work that may be required. For reference, Glyn Edwards is the Rights of Way Officer at Somerset Council.

#### **Somerset Councillors Report**

Cllr Kerley reported that the Local Government Settlement had been granted and is for a 3-year period. Despite a slight lift, there will be more difficult choices to make financially. He reiterated that he sings the Parish Council's praises for being so proactive and acknowledged that he is held accountable by them which whilst not always easy, is effective!

Meeting re-opened 7.36pm

#### **MINUTES**

##### **25/147: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).**

None were received, but Cllr Wielgus will be late arriving.



## **25/148: Declarations of Interest.**

None were declared.

## **25/149: Minutes of the last meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 (LGA 1972sch12 para 41(1)).**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December had been circulated previously.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the [minutes of the meeting](#) held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 as a true & correct record of that meeting. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

### Matters Arising

None

## **25/150: Councillor Vacancy**

David Furse-Roberts had been co-opted at the previous meeting in absentia. He signed his acceptance of office form before the meeting began and then provided a brief introduction of his areas of interest and past experience. The Chairman and other members welcomed him.

Rich Fell had also submitted an expression of interest for the remaining vacancy and again provided a summary of his experience. He had previously been a parish councillor but had resigned due to increased personal commitments. He now has more time and energy and works as a volunteer with Dick Sheppard on the footpaths. All members agreed to co-opt Rich, and he duly signed his acceptance of office form and joined the meeting.

The clerk will organise email addresses and provide details of training for the two new members.

*Cllr Wielgus arrived.*

## **25/151: Levels & Moors LCN (Local County Network)**

The new link officer of the Levels & Moors LCN, Chris Booth, had been invited to attend the meeting and introduce himself. Newly appointed last month, his role is to improve collaboration and provide support between the parish councils and Somerset Council. He understood that there are mixed feelings about the efficacy of the LCN network but highlighted some of the successes such as the loneliness project and active travel. He will keep sharing information from meetings via a regular newsletter.

Cllr Cox provided some background for the new members – the LCN project was set up when the unitary authority was formed, and Long Sutton is one of 33 parishes over a wide area in the Levels and Moors LCN. It has not proved effective, with Highways and the Planning service being the two main issues for residents which are historically the worst to deal with. It is an ongoing annoyance that residents are paying twice for devolved services – once through their Council Tax and again via the precept.

Cllr Kerley mentioned that the loneliness project is meant to tie in with the Slinky bus service – an example of information from the LCN network feeding back to Somerset Council. He felt that the LCN boundary is a problem as it is an artificial footprint, not geographical.

Members thanked Chris Booth for coming to the meeting and expressed optimism for a more effective working relationship in the future.



## **25/152: Village Flooding Issues**

Cllr Tulk confirmed that the contractors had carried out 2 further days of work in the village in early December (the 3<sup>rd</sup> day planned was cancelled due to a mechanical breakdown). Surveillance over the Christmas period confirmed that all gullies and drains are running well and proving effective. There were no other issues to report.

## **25/153: Highways Matters**

Cllr Cox summarised that for many years there had been conversations about signage and road markings at the Bineham Cross junction. New yellow markings had been put in the wrong location, and he has been arguing the case with the Highways Department for further markings in the correct location. He was pleased to report that they will now be adding 6 sets of yellow lines on either side of the road. The SID will need to be positioned there to monitor some data, but having met with a lot of resistance, he was really pleased to finally get a result. The work will be carried out in the next financial year by Somerset Council.

David Crawshaw added his congratulations having campaigned for a long time to improve the safety at the junction. He had been amazed that no one had been prepared to take responsibility for safety. He still felt that a solid white line is required for dangerous overtaking at the crossroads and will continue to canvas for that. Cllr Rousell will investigate the best locations for the SID.

## **25/154: Planning Matters**

There were no new applications to date, and all decision notices had been previously circulated.

## **25/155: Grounds Maintenance**

Councillors Tulk and Cox have been working on three specifications to put out to tender – one for ditches and grips, one for grass cutting and one for hedge trimming and verge cutting. Three maps had been marked up accordingly and a selection of contractors identified to invite to tender. Quotes will be requested by the end of February, in order to make a decision at the March meeting ready to commence a new contract for the new financial year.

Cllr Wielgus asked a question about clearing ditches and the sides that build up becoming higher – should that be removed at some point? Cllr Cox confirmed that ideally yes it should and contractors are also being asked for an hourly rate to carry out ad hoc work as required, which will provide a degree of flexibility for tasks such as that. The council will try to employ local people where possible and will be offering 3-year contracts on a rolling basis.

## **25/156: Finance**

- a. To approve the accounts for payment in January 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts for payment for January 2026.

- b. To view and approve the bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 as circulated.

- c. To formally approve the precept request for 2026/'27.

Members **APPROVED** the request of £52,000 precept for 2026/'27, an increase of 2.87% per household. This year, Somerset Council will pay it in two instalments (April and September), a



change to previous years, due to the majority of council tax being collected by monthly direct debit. The clerk highlighted that cash flow and any investment strategy will need careful management.

- d. To note the VAT reclaim for Q3 of £888.78 had been submitted on 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

Members **NOTED** the amount of £888.78 VAT reclaimed for Q3, and the clerk confirmed that this had been received on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

- e. To note the content of the Q3 Financial Summary Report

Members **NOTED** the contents of the report.

### **25/157: Village Hall and Recreation Ground**

Cllr Cox had circulated the minutes from the recent committee meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> January. The exciting event to note is the planned Sports Showcase on 18<sup>th</sup> April when all the various clubs and activities will put on demonstrations etc. There is a lot that goes on! The committee does require one more parish councillor and is still looking for a Minute Secretary.

### **25/158: Environment Group**

Cllr Wielgus reported that all is looking good at the Nature Reserve - the Cornish Hedge has been started, the ponds are filling up and the fruit trees planted. There are two D of E students who want to volunteer, and he is deciding how to spend the rest of the Wessex Water grant. They are considering running Nature Day again this year, but would prefer to do it in the spring, rather than the autumn. Cllr Furse-Roberts suggested that items to consider for inclusion could be the return on solar panels, and Cllr Pritchard said that in the past, the energy efficiency element had been well-received.

Cllr Greenfield asked what could be done to prevent people parking on the triangle at the top of the drove. She has planted some primroses and wildflowers there, but the area is being damaged by tyre tracks. Cllr Cox suggested making it a smaller area.

### **25/159: Annual Parish Meeting 2026**

Members agreed the date of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm for the Annual Parish Meeting. The Chairman will invite Cllr Bill Revans, leader of Somerset Council to be a guest speaker and provide an opportunity to explain some of the challenges they have faced since taking office.

### **25/160: Representative reports from councillors.**

- a. Community Safety (including the monthly crime statistics from Police.uk and the SID - Speed Indicator Device).

Cllr Rousell confirmed that the SID will be back in the village in February. There was one incidence of criminal damage in October in the Langport Road area.

- b. Lengthsman

Cllr Tulk confirmed that the tree on the green has now been braced and the grass underneath can be cut when necessary. However, the bench won't be replaced at the moment.

- c. Highways and Footpaths

Cllr Pritchard reported that the volunteers will carry out maintenance on various stiles which have sunk a bit in the boggy conditions once the weather allows. Any defects can be reported by using



the online reference (see details provided earlier during public questions). Members agreed that a map should be produced and copies left at Harry's Cider, the Devonshire Arms, Upton Bridge Farm Shop & Café and other locations in the village. Cllr Cox also suggested that they needed to invest in some clean stone to drop onto various footpaths – this is an action for the spring.

### **25/161: Communication: website and e-newsletter**

Members agreed that the next newsletter should include the following matters: Christmas cart – coffee morning in February – ask people to mention any defects on footpaths to pass on to volunteers (5 miles of footpaths) and include a link to a map of the footpaths. W.I put together a map of 5 walks – updating website pages for clubs and societies -defib locations – Slinky Bus – Save the date for Sports Showcase & Parish Meeting - local business – Squeaky Clean The clerk was asked to check the website and list any items that require updating.

### **25/162: Correspondence including any not previously distributed & Councillors' Comments**

Cllr Pritchard reminded the meeting of the upcoming W.I event, "Warm Space Welcome Café" on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January from 10am-12pm. Everyone is invited, and it is all free.

Cllr Cox confirmed the details of the retirement tea party for Dave the postie on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January. It will be a bring and share event with leftovers from the W.I event the day before. The Village Hall Committee will cover the cost of a thankyou cake and Lucy Jones will run the kitchen. There will be a collection for a charity favoured by Dave, either Guide Dogs or the Dog's Trust and Cllr Wilegus offered to set up a QR code for ease of donating.

Cllr Tulk had updated a welcome letter for new residents. Councillors were asked to check it for accuracy and send any corrections to the clerk. The finalised copy can then be distributed to any new arrivals to Long Sutton.

Cllr Greenfield confirmed that the Friends Meeting House could be included on the Emergency Plan as a muster point / resident centre. The clerk will update the draft accordingly and circulate it for final approval.

### **25/163: Date of next meeting.**

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>February 2026, at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

### **25/164: Agenda items for the next meeting.**

Petanque and outdoor table tennis table. VH Committee member.

Meeting closed at 9.02 pm

**END OF MINUTES**