

MINUTES of the MEETING of NETTLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Held on TUESDAY 10th FEBRUARY 2026 - 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Robin Wichard (Chair), Oliver Reynolds, Wendy Perry, Becky Marsh, Shelagh Laver, Justin Nichols, and Clerk – Sophie Wichard.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs Iain Mackie and Liz Scott.

No Somerset Councillors attended the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: it was noted that the published copy of the minutes had not included the planning report. Revised minutes were to be circulated with the missing report added. With this exception, the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. OPEN FORUM – FOR ALL RESIDENTS:

There were no members of the public present.

4. SOMERSET COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:

There were no Councillors from the County in attendance at the meeting and no reports submitted.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

5.1 a letter was sent from the Parish Council to County Highways expressing our support for the proposed 7.5 ton weight limit on the road from Elworthy to Fair Cross (previously discussed). Cllr Perry expressed concern over the increased weight of vehicles using these smaller roads and the damage it is potentially causing to bridges, culverts and related infrastructure.

5.2 a request had been received from colleagues in Old Cleeve Parish asking if we would write to support their campaign to have improved signage at the entry to Woodadvent Lane as many heavy vehicles are being directed by Sat Nav down that road as a route to Roadwater, This was agreed.

6. MATTERS OF REPORT: there were no issues to discuss as all matters of interest would arise in Reports.

7. CURRENT REPORTS:

Chairman's Report:

The Chairman suggested that a priority for the Parish Council was to engage with the local community it represents. We missed the deadline for the last Parish magazine but an article will appear in the next one explaining about what the Council does and urging people to come along to the May Annual Parish Meeting. It was intended that there will be another article in the April Magazine which will focus on the precept and what that is

used for. The Chairman then announced that due to increased responsibilities outside of the Council he no longer had the capacity to fulfil; the role of Chair and would therefore be stepping down at the next meeting.

Local Community Network (LCN) Update:

Cllr Wichard reported that the recent Watchet LCN meeting again did not offer a forum to address the issues which particularly concern our parish. With no settlements larger than hamlets and no real amenities (the village hall and local shop being outside of the parish) our focus was inevitably on the state of the roads (which is addressed in the Highways sub-group) and the very poor broadband coverage.

Highways:

Cllr Marsh reported that the roads had suffered badly as a result of the poor weather, build-up of trimmings from hedge cutting and sludge from fields (wash off and from farm vehicle movements). Some roadside drains have been cleared by County but there was surprise that some of the worse drains appear to have been missed. The build-up of material from recent hedge cutting has exacerbated the problem. Rain has caused a lot of run off mud on the roads and there was concern that any sudden frosts will cause the road surfaces to break down further.

Footpaths:

Only one report was received regarding a tree which had fallen across the path from Nettlecombe Court to Combe. However, it was noted that the tree had been down for some time and that it was perfectly possible to walk under it without risk.

Planning:

Brooke Lea – retrospective planning permission for a boundary wall had been granted. Rock Cottage – a further application had been received for a second story in what appeared to be a graduated enlargement of the building.

Beggearn Huish Barn – permission had been granted for short-term covered camping but it was pleasing to note that limitations we recommended had been incorporated.

West Somerset Flood Group:

It was noted that there has been a lot of water recently but that the parish appeared to have fared well. A request has been received from Monksilver Parish Council to form a combined Monksilver/Nettlecombe/Williton flood group. The hope is that the Environment Agency will engage to offer some clarity over riparian rights – there is a need to define the obligations and responsibilities of land owners as no guidance has been received to date.

Other Parish Matters:

No matters were raised.

Clerk - Finance:

A vote had been held on the motion – put by the Chair – to increase the precept by 20%. This was agreed with one objection. It was noted that there had been no rise in the precept for many years but that there was now an urgent need to replace the parish laptop. There also needed to be a contingency fund to cover possible works needed with respect to the church commitments. The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the old churchyard while the PCC maintains the current grave yard.

Sophie Wichard (Acting Clerk) also noted that she was not claiming payments for her work with the monies saved being added to the funds for a replacement laptop. She was thanked for her generosity but noted that she did not feel confident in the role and hoped that a more permanent Clerk could be appointed as she now has a new job.

The Chair noted that an email had been received from SALC stating that they now had a pool of locum Clerks available and it was hoped that we might be able to take advantage of this provision until a new Clerk was appointed.

A question was raised about the parish notice-boards. The one in Yarde had been destroyed in a storm and the one at Torre was in very poor condition. It was hoped that the increase in the precept and money saved from the Clerk's salary might help to provide replacements. It was also noted that there is a noticeboard in the entrance to the Church which could be used for posting minutes etc.

Although invoices had been requested from Darren Grellier and Black Cat Computers in respect of the work they have undertaken non have yet been received and therefore there was no change in the Parish finances.

8. FUTURE BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION:

Cllr Perry brought along an emergency container which had been made available at another meeting she had attended. The idea was that a sticker could be placed on the fridge – or other conspicuous place – to show where the container was kept. In it would be details of medications, next of kin, medical issues etc. in case of emergency. The Chair agreed to try and find out where these were from and investigate their availability.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 12th May with the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00 immediately followed by the regular Parish Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.