

Clatworthy Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 February 2025 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Present: Sally Moran (Chair), Kevin Chesterman, Linda Sharp, Frances Nicholson (Somerset Councillor), Sophie Macfarlane, Norma Martin (Clerk).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Deer, Jake Forgham, John Ward, Steven Pugsley (Somerset Councillor).

Chair Sally welcomed Sophie Macfarlane as a newly co-opted Councillor to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Cllr Stephen Branfield.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 6 August 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 November 2024 were confirmed correct and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising not covered on the agenda

3/06/24/004 Replacement of wind turbine at Beech Tree Farm. Planning was notified that the parish had no objections. Chair Sally has since visited the site and reported that the new turbine, although having longer blades, is quieter and less intrusive than the previous one. **Action: COMPLETE**

A special Parish Council meeting will be arranged to respond to the Boundary Commission.

A detailed response to the Boundary Commission's review of polling divisions in Somerset was prepared and submitted to the working party. **Action: COMPLETE**

The Risk Register Management and Control section will be updated to reflect completed actions.

The Parish Risk Register has been updated and re-issued. **Action: COMPLETE**

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue - Precept consultation: Chair Sally responded. **Action: COMPLETE**

Wivey Library Letter: More information to be sought before any decision is made. The Clerk reported that no response had been received to our request for further information on Clatworthy residents use of Wivey Library.

Consequently no donation will be made at this time. **Action: COMPLETE**

4. Update from Somerset Council

Cllr Frances reported that the drastic cuts proposed to the highways budget are being reconsidered by Somerset Council and she was hopeful that at least some of the recent improvements to the service would be retained.

Unfortunately, the architect of those improvements resigned as a direct result of Somerset Council's initial response and we have lost his valued leadership.

More urgently, Cllr Frances reported that Somerset Council had unexpectedly rejected the Joint Working Party's proposals for new division boundaries, in particular it had now been suggested that Clatworthy, Huish Champflower and Brompton Ralph should be moved into the Wiveliscombe division rather than the Carhampton one. She urged that the Parish Council raise the issue directly with the Elections Manager as soon as possible if it was unhappy with that proposal.

The Clerk will prepare a response and contact Somerset Council this week. **Action: Clerk**

5. Update from Exmoor LCN

Avon and Somerset Police Report: Two thefts were recorded in December-January: a vintage tractor & trailer and a quad bike. It was noted that thieves have started to hide valuable stolen vehicles and farm equipment out of sight, hidden in field corners, for a few days in case they have tracking devices fitted. It was stressed that the public are encouraged to report all sightings of anything suspicious as soon as practicable.

Exmoor National Park: Your views on the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan are sought. Please go to <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enpa/key-documents/partnership-plan-2025-consultation> for details if you would like to comment.

Highways: If any temporary road signs are not removed after use, please notify highways via <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

6. Village Emergency Plan

No additional issues have been identified, but the Village Emergency Plan will be revisited to see if there are any associated risks that should be added to the Parish Risk Register.

Action: Sally ONGOING

Chair Sally reported that no progress had been made with the village plan due to lack of resource. In the short term, if there was bad weather and/or a long term power cut, Cllr Kevin and Cllr Sophie would check on residents in the immediate village and Chair Sally would phone those living further away, to ensure all were OK.

7. Finance

7.1. Current Position

Balance at Lloyds Williton 31/10/24 £4179.46

Receipts	Ref	£	Details
		21.46	Reclaimed VAT Apr21-Mar24
Total Receipts		21.46	

Payments	Ref	£	Details
SALC	BACS	25.00	Outstanding Training INV-0536
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Nov24
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Dec24
Hugo Fox	D/D	11.99	Website monthly subscription – Jan25

Total Payments 60.97

Balance at Lloyds Williton 31/1/25 £4139.95

Spend against 24-25 budget

	Plan	Actual	Comments
Audit fees	30.00	30.00	
Insurance – Parish Council	200.00	127.56	
Clatworthy VH – Insurance	350.00	372.28	
SALC membership	30.00	24.69	
Clerk/Councillor training	30.00	100.00	
Postage & stationery	30.00		
Defibrillator	200.00	235.98	
Phone box	50.00		
Parish Web site	160.00	119.90	
WAP – Wivey Link	100.00		
Other local charities	200.00		
Contingency/Misc	300.00	71.44	

Total 1680.00 1081.85

7.2. Payments for Authorisation

Council authorised the following expenditure:

Annual postage and stationery allowance to the Clerk	£30.00
Donation to support Wivey Link	£100.00
Donation to Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance	£100.00
Donation to St Margaret's Hospice	£100.00

7.3. Approval of PC Payments Authorisation Process

The process defined in PC Finances, Issue 1 was approved by Council.

7.4. Precept and Audit

The precept agreed at the previous meeting has been submitted to Somerset Council and receipt acknowledged. The sum requested should be received in April.

8. Roads

It was noted that incidents of speeding through the village had reduced, but the police still want all such issues to be reported to them.

The financial impact of losing dumpy bags will be investigated.

In summary, the annual cost of purchasing road salt for the seven bins/bags currently identified in the parish would be around £500, if all the stock was used up every year. That figure does not include the purchase of any containers. Details of the calculation and other considerations that would arise if this became necessary, are held by the Clerk with the rest of the financial records. **Action: COMPLETE**

9. Parish Council 'roles'

In the light of the current move to push responsibilities down from county to the parish councils, the Clerk suggested that it would be useful to review the PC's responsibilities and priorities to ensure that those things it needs to do are done (as easily, and with as little bureaucracy, as possible) and that anything it doesn't need to do is passed on to others – or stopped.

Cllr Kevin's suggested that a brief description of the purpose and function of the Parish Council would be helpful when trying to promote recruitment of councillors, especially as and when he and Sophie go round the village speaking to people as part of our emergency plan. The Clerk will produce an initial draft. **Action: Clerk**

10. Approval of PC documentation for issue

The following documents were approved for issue and will be made available on the PC website. **Action: Clerk**

PC Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, Issue 1

PC Finances, Issue 1

Risk Management, Issue 3

11. Other matters for information

Heart of Wessex devolution - expression of interest - information only

Citizens Advice West Somerset - report for 2024 - information only

Boundary Commission Review, Issue 2 - response sent by PC – Issue 3, will be available (v. item 4 above)

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue - consultation - information only

Wivey Library Letter -no response has been received, so no donation is to be made this year.

Meeting dates for the coming year are: 6 May (AGM), 5 August, 4 November and 3 February 2026.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

In order to reduce ink usage and paper wastage, please note that from the AGM in May 2025, the Clerk will not provide paper copies at meetings of documents previously e-mailed to Parish Councillors, except by prior agreement with individuals. (Printed minutes and agenda will be available by default for Somerset Councillors.)