

LUXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Luxborough Parish Council held on 28 May 2025 at Luxborough Village Hall at 8.00 pm

Present: Cllrs D Powell (Chair), J Weller, C Henson, G Tucker, R O'Hare, Cllr Steven Pugsley, Clerk: Mary Andrews

Public Question Time. Five members of the public were present.

25/01 The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.03pm.

25/02 Election of the Chair. A nomination was proposed by Cllr Henson and seconded by Cllr Waller for Cllr Powell who was duly elected. Cllr Powell's Declaration of Acceptance of the post of Chair was signed.

25/03 Election of the Vice Chair. A nomination was proposed by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Tucker for Cllr Bolland who was duly elected. Cllr Bolland accepted the post of Vice Chair and a Declaration of Acceptance will be signed on 30 May 2025.

25/04 To Appoint Internal Auditor for Parish Accounts. Cllrs resolved to appoint Pat McGlynn as the auditor for our 2024-25 annual parish accounts.(P: Cllr O'Hare, S: Cllr Powell)

25/05 Public Question Time. A question was raised as to whether or not the annual village fete was going to happen this year as our previous Fete Chair had stepped down and there was no one to replace him. The Chairman stated that he and the church warden would be meeting within the week and would get back to the village with information on how and when preparations would proceed.

25/06 Apologies for absence. Apologies received from Cllr F Nicholson, A Sparling, M Bolland.

25/07 Declarations of Interest. Cllr Powell declared an interest with respect to planning application no 6/20/25/002.

25/08 To Review Parish Council Code of Conduct. Cllrs resolved to accept the Parish Council Code of Conduct after its annual review by the Clerk as a document that continues to be fit for purpose. (P: Cllr Waller, S: Cllr O'Hare)

25/09 Minutes of the meeting of 29 March 2025. Cllrs resolved to accept minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting. (P: Cllr Henson, S: Cllr Powell)¹.

25/10 Chairman's AGM Report. Cllr Powell reported it's been another frustrating year for the Parish Council as far as Somerset Council are concerned (with the noted exception of Cllrs Nicholson and Pugsley who have been extraordinarily supportive and helpful). The Unitary Authority (Somerset County) which came into being 1 April 2023 has still not communicated with the parish councils about what services will or will not be devolved. This is making it very difficult for us to set our yearly budget for the second year running. They still have not produced any guidance for the parish councils outlining exactly what services are going to be withdrawn nor

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¹ P- Proposed. S - Seconded
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provided any guidance on how to anticipate what our financial responsibilities would be before having to set our precept for the 2025-26 financial year. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, we have decided to keep our precept at the same amount as for the previous 2024-25 financial year. Over the past several months, the village has had to endure several road closures, many on short notice, which has severely impacted the local residents' ability to get out of the village and to access vital services in Dunster and Minehead. The multitude of road closures has caused severe disruptions to local businesses, farmers and residents alike. The Chairman stated that he and Cllr Bolland did an assessment of the hedge cut made last year by the highways department and determined where the one cut was made was worse than if no cut had been made. He said he thought we might need to consider paying a private contractor to do a second cut this year. On a more positive note, Cllr Bolland has done a great job, once again, liaising with our SC Highway contact and advocating for us. The Chair also thanked Cllr Bolland for attending the LCN meetings all year as our representative. This year we are adding a Bleed Kit to our first aid supplies and it will be positioned outside the village hall next to the defibrillator. Additionally, the Parish Council will install a new notice board in the village hall carpark to replace the one that perished last year. There was another successful litter pickup by village volunteers this year so a big thank you to them. He also thanked all our councillors for their support, and to Somerset Council councillors, Steven and Frances, for making every effort to attend our meetings and to Mary for all her hard work as Clerk.

25/11 Update from Somerset Councillors. Councillor Pugsley reported that Somerset Council, this past year, has been spent trying to identify cost savings for the Council, mostly through redundancies and reorganisations within departments. They have been concentrating their attention on the larger communities and are now working on the smaller settlements (like ours) which is much more difficult. This explains why the parish councils have not received much guidance yet on what services will be devolved. He added that they are now working to help the smaller communities band together to get gulley cleaning and other basic highway maintenance tasks done in a cost effective manner. Cllr Pugsley said he would ask Highways to work harder at giving us fair warning about pending road closures in our area and said he would advocate on our behalf to get a 2 metre high cut made when they cut the hedges. He stated that Highways was working hard to keep road closures from conflicting and that is something crops up in our parish that is plainly wrong, to please contact him and Cllr Nicholson straightaway so they can help us. He said that the utility companies were bad about communicating their road closures and not giving good advance notice. These companies can be fined by Somerset Council if they are not in compliance with the stated rules and regulations governing notices and signage. The next LCN meeting is scheduled for Thursday 6 June at 8pm in Dulverton.

25/12 Planning. Application 6/20/25/00 (Rose Bank Cottage) - The documents submitted to the ENPA Planning Office were reviewed and discussed with Cllr Powell recusing himself from discussions. A vote was taken by 4 councillors with 1 declared interest (recusal) and 2 non-present. There were 3 votes for approval and 1 vote of abstention. The only concern raised was that the garage, although made larger for cars to park, would not, ultimately, be used for that purpose and residents of that property would continue to park on the road. Currently, the street parking being used for this residence is along a narrow, double-blind bend and utilises parts of a neighbour's private property boundary. It was stressed that residents who live

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adjacent to the property be reassured that their personal property access points would not be blocked by street parking once the garage is enlarged and that the garage would be used for its intended purpose of garaging vehicles.

25/13 Highways 1.) Cllr Bolland was absent from this meeting but it was commented by one councillor that work was commencing at the Nutcombe Bottom site and expected to take up to 8 months for completion.

25/14 New Email address for Parish Clerk. The Clerk informed the meeting that she has to change the email account for statutory purposes and that she was in the process of segueing over from the current gmail account to a new, Council – approved one which is supplied and supported by our Website hosting site.

25/15 New Insurance Policy. The Clerk informed the PC that our long-standing insurance policy with Zurich was no longer available to us and that we needed to update our policy. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek a new quote from Zurich and go ahead and procure coverage similar to what we have had in the past. The expected quote was not expected to be much more expensive than the previous one. (P: Cllr Henson, S: Cllr Powell)

25/16 Update moving Parish finances online. The Clerk reported she had met with the Clerk from Nether Stowey to discuss the mechanics of moving our parish finances over to Unity Trust from NatWest Bank. The procedure appears to be straightforward and although there will be a monthly service charge for this account, the interest accrued on a yearly basis will cover the cost, It was resolved that the Clerk proceed with setting up a new account on behalf of the parish Council. (P: Cllr O'Hare, S: Cllr Henson)

25/17 Finance 1.)Q4 and End of Year Financial Statement. Auditing of these accounts will happen in early June and presented to the PC at our next meeting on 25 June 2025 for approval. 2.)May 2025 Schedule of Payments and Note Receipts. Cllrs resolved to agree and approve the Schedule of Payments (P: Cllr Waller, S: Cllr Henson).

25/18 AOB – 1.) Cllr Powell remarked that the Motorcycle Trial through the village on Good Friday of this year was a success in that it did not cause disruption and there were no complaints from anyone. 2.) It was agreed that the Bleed Kit be installed on the wall adjacent to the defibrillator. 3.) As of this meeting, we have not heard back from the Boundary Commission yet as to their decision on whether or not to move the boundary lines on Exmoor. We hope to hear their first proposal in early June. 4.) The new sign in the village carpork is to go in the same location as the previous one.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 8.00pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

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Schedule of Payments: Dave Powell (reimbursement) £77.94, SALC Ltd (annual dues) £93.46, Core Synergy Ltd (Function 28) £24.00, West Somerset Flood Group (Annual dues) £5.00, Luxborough Village Hall Charity (annual rental fee) £60.00

Schedule of Receipts: 2025/26 Precept £4859.00

Signed: _____.

Date: _____.