

Compton Bishop Parish Council

COMPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting 12th February 2025

Present: Councillors C Settle (Chair), E Parker, D McCarthy, G Hancock and Alan Mortimore (Clerk).

25/02A To receive any apologies for non-attendance.

Councillor T Mason, Somerset Councillors B Filmer and T Grimes.

25/02B To receive any declarations of interest.

No declarations of interest were received.

25/02C To receive and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th January 2025 previously circulated.

It was resolved to approve the minutes. Councillor Settle signed the minutes as being a true record.

25/02D To receive Clerks Report.

- 1) The ScribeLite Accounting System - The Clerk confirmed that he had attended two courses regarding completing the end of year financial accounts in April. These were remote courses via Zoom and free of charge.
- 2) Financial Position – The Clerk advised the meeting of the current cash situation with both the Current and Savings Accounts.
- 3) Cross Memorial Hall – The Clerk had received a request from the local Climate Change for a discussion on providing roof insulation in the hall as there are grants currently available. Councillor Parker proposed that the group should be invited to speak to the Parish Council at the next meeting and this was unanimously agreed by all the Councillors. The Clerk to contact the Climate Change Group.

25/02E To receive County Councillors Report.


Although Councillor Filmer was not able to attend the meeting he provided an update on the current developments from Somerset Council which included: -

- 1) Financial – The Council's request to raise the Council Tax above the 4.9% cap has been approved by the government. The Council declared a financial emergency in November 2023 and was only able to set a balanced budget in February 2024 by agreeing to significant savings, job cuts and the sale of both commercial investments and surplus land and property (estimated at around £50M). The council is already reliant on reducing its workforce to balance its budget for the 2025/26 financial year - with staff redundancies accounting for £34m out of a total of £47m in planned savings. But rising costs and demand for services, have left the council with a further expected budget gap of £66m. The increase over and above the Council Tax cap will go some way to filling the gap but it is likely the government will still have to agree to Somersets request to extend its capitalisation directive - which allows the council to use the proceeds from selling off land, property and other publicly-owned assets to fund day-to-day spending on public services.
- 2) The full transcript will be input on the Compton Bishop website.

25/02F To approve the bank statement and the following payments.

Payee	Description	Amount £
Clerk	Net salary (Jan 25)	318.86
HMRC	Tax deducted at source (Jan 25)	79.80
Clerk	Expenses (Jan 25)	11.99
ScribeLite Accounting for Parish Councils	Direct Debit set up for monthly payments providing a full accounting system for the Parish from July 2024.	14.40 Monthly
Wel- Medical	Defibrillator Replacement Pad	80.23
Richard Brinson	Cleaning ditches on Butts Batch	360.00

The payments were approved.

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25/02G

To consider the following Planning applications

Planning application number	Location	Proposal
21/24/00006	Land North of Cross Moor Drove, Lower Weare	Application for the retention of a mobile home to be used as an agricultural worker dwelling. It was resolved to object to this application. Full details on the Somerset Council Planning website.

25/02H

To note the Planning Decisions Update.

Planning application number	Location	Decision

There were no Planning Decisions to note.

25/02I

Safe Pathway Campaign Cross Lane – update on any progress the Landowners.

There has not been any further progress as it appears that the two landowners are not engaging with the campaign committee and they are looking at ways to move the project forward. However, a more adequate electric fence has been installed in the top field (Axbridge end). Also, with the new proposed changes to the A38 at Cross (see item 25/02O) it is not clear how this will affect the pathway and more clarification is required from Somerset Highways.

25/02J

To consider Councillor Training.

Appropriate training sessions to be considered when a fresh set of courses become available.

25/02K

To receive Councillor reports.

- 1) The New village Sign in Cross Lane** - Councillor Parker informed the meeting that with the agreement of the landowner of the farm whose entrance was being affected by the height of the sign, it had now been raised to an acceptable height to satisfy both parties. However, the tops of the poles now need to be cut level with the actual sign and Councillor Hancock agreed to investigate and see if he was able to cut the poles with his equipment.
- 2) £100 in the budget for Tree Planting** – Councillor McCarthy mentioned that she would like to utilise the £100 in the budget to purchase some young tree shrubs to be planted on the grass area of the “vehicle pull in” on the Webbington Road. This was an area which Somerset Council had previously agreed that trees could be planted. Councillor Parker and Councillor Hancock proposed and seconded the motion, and this was approved by the rest of the members. Councillor McCarthy will obtain some prices for the next meeting.

25/02L


Update on the installation of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) which has been approved by Somerset Highways and the proposed fitting and management procedures.

The Clerk confirmed that the SID has now been purchased, and the Council is now waiting for the contractors employed by Somerset Highways to fit the three posts needed to house the SID before it can be utilised. The Clerk confirmed that he has been informed by highways that due to volume of work around the county there will be a delay before the posts are installed. It was agreed to contact highways again in March for an update.

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- 25/02M To consider investigating the water quality of the rivers and streams in and around the Parish.**
From the minutes of the last Axevale Climate Change Group meeting it was mentioned that the water quality had been tested by a trained volunteer at the Bridge in Cross around six months ago and it was assessed as good quality.
The local Ecologist who has agreed to help the council in investigating the water quality has some data from Bristol Water which may prove to be useful. However, both Councillors McCarthy and Settle had work and other commitments so were unable to meet with the Ecologist as mentioned in the previous minutes. The Clerk to speak to the Chair (Councillor Mason) on his return to ascertain what further action should be taken.
- 25/02N Update on cutting back of vegetation that is stopping the water flowing through streams that cause problems with overflowing water and no good for the wildlife habitat.**
One of the Landowners has cut back the vegetation. A letter has been received from the other Landowner advising that he has contacted the Environment Agency for their advice on who is responsible for clearing such overgrowth. The Clerk confirmed that he had written again to the landowner and was awaiting a reply.
- 25/02O Update on various Highway issues including the A38.**
The proposed plans for the upgrade of the A38 from Edithmead to the boundaries of Bristol have been released. The main one affecting the parish is the upgrade to the A38 at the Cross/Axbridge junction. Drawings of the planned changes have been included and members of the public/organisations have until the 25th March to respond to the proposed changes. It was resolved to have an extraordinary public "open meeting" with the residents of the parish so that everyone can comment on the proposed changes. Dates for such a meeting need to be finalised along with when the Memorial Hall is available. The Councillors and the Clerk to liaise a suitable date and time for the meeting as well as promoting it on the Notice Boards and Social Media (Cross Connections).
- 25/02P To consider purchasing a replacement bench for "Maggie's Corner" (by the side of the bridge over the Old River Axe on Old Coach Road).**
The bench was recently repaired. According to the Councillors who have inspected it, It did not require replacement. However, as a resident had kindly researched a replacement bench it was suggested that Councillor Mason (as Chair of the Council) should inspect the bench personally to make a final decision. The Clerk to contact Councillor Mason.
- 25/02Q Update on the progress of revamping the website.**
The Clerk confirmed that the updating is progressing. One issue is the updating of "Local Organisations" which is ongoing as contact is needed with each one to ensure that it still exists with any updated details. There will be an update at the next meeting.
- 25/02R To consider storage of local Compton Bishop history and information which has been compiled after many years of research.**
Councillors Parker and Settle agreed to go and view the documents to see the amount involved and will agree a mutually convenient date. The Clerk to contact Margaret Jordan to make sure such a date is acceptable.
- 25/02S To consider issues with the National Trust.**
Before the meeting Councillor McCarthy had emailed the members with photos of the problems with the National Trust land at Crooks Peak including potholes, damaged gates and fences along with fallen trees on bridleways. These issues need to be addressed, and Councillor McCarthy confirmed that the Local National Trust Ranger would be willing to attend the next meeting to answer questions on the problems raised by the council.

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- 25/02T** To consider inserting some form of wording on the back of the village sign in Cross.
It was resolved that "Thank you for driving carefully through our villages" should be the wording.
Councillor Parker agreed to contact the signage company for a quotation for the next meeting.
- 25/02U** To discuss writing to Somerset County Roads regarding the emptying of the Gullies and repair of the drains in Compton Bishop.
Before the meeting Councillor Mason had given a draft of a letter to Somerset Roads.
The Clerk to prepare the final draft for approval by the members before being issued.
- 25/02V** Items for the next agenda
- 1) Safe Pathway Campaign – update on any progress with the landowners.
 - 2) To consider Councillor Training.
 - 3) Update on the progress of installing the Speed Indicator Device around the Parish.
 - 4) Update on the Investigation of the water quality of the rivers and streams in and around the Parish.
 - 5) Update on Cutting back of vegetation that is stopping the water flowing through streams that cause problems with overflowing water and no good for the wildlife habitat.
 - 6) Update on various Highways issues including A38 upgrade at the Cross/Axbridge Junction.
 - 7) Update on investigating a suitable new bench for "Maggie's Corner"
 - 8) Update on the progress of revamping the website.
 - 9) Update on the storage of local Compton Bishop history and information compiled over many years of research.
 - 10) To consider issues encountered with the National Trust.

Next Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 7pm

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