

ANNUAL MEETING OF EXMOOR PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT MINUTES

Monday 2nd June 2025 6.15pm at The Old School, Simonsbath

Present: Parish Councillors – F Schott (Chair) FS, T Gowlland TG, J Wright JW, R Fisher RF, Somerset Cllr F Nicholson FN, Somerset Cllr S Pugsley SP, Clerk R Tomalin, Members of the public: None

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council started at 6.23pm.

39/25 Election of Chair: TG proposed and JW 2nd the appointment of Mr Francis Schott as Chair. He was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

40/25 Questions from the public: None

41/25 Apologies for Absence: Cllr C O'Connor

42/25 Co-option of Councillor: Due to the sudden passing of AC a vacancy has arisen on the PC, all notices have been issued and the PC is now able to co-opt. FS proposes RF is co-opted and JW seconds. All agree RF is co-opted as Cllr for Exmoor PC.

43/25 Election of Vice Chair and appointment of representatives:

Vice Chair – FS proposed and JW 2nd Tegan Gowlland
Exmoor LCN – CO

Highways Warden – RF (likely to miss the September Highways Winter Maintenance meeting, FS to attend instead)

Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust – FS/JW/TG

SP arrived at 6.29pm

44/24 Declarations of notifiable interest: None

45/24 Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 13/03/2025 and Emergency Planning Meeting held on 07/05/2025: These were proposed by FS and seconded by JW as a true and correct record of what took place and the Chair signed.

TG left the meeting at 6.31pm

46/25 Matters arising from the minutes of 13/03/2025 and 07/05/25 – discussed under agenda items as appropriate

47/25 Somerset Councillor reports: (i) Boundary Commission – the consultation is due to run from 3rd June to 11th August (ii) LCN – the AGM is on Thurs when the priorities for the year will be set. There is still no structure in place for the LCN to be able to procure services on behalf of the Parish Councils (iii) The Bridges & Structures team are still looking at the sawmill wall. The bulge could just be in the wall and may not be structural at all.

48/25 Planning: none

49/25 Finance Report: (i) Invoices for Approval at May meeting – **Zurich Municipal** insurance **£214 Chq 335**, Clerks Pay & Expenses Apr – June 25 **R Tomalin £180.58 Chq 336** dated 30th June, PAYE due to **HMRC £108.80 Chq 337** dated 30th June – all APPROVED. Clerk explained the Clear Councils insurance renewal was considerably higher than last year, Zurich offer a similar policy which is £150 cheaper.

(ii) Councillor Training – Clerk noted that there were many SALC training sessions available if any Cllr required a refresh (iii) Bank mandate – authorised signatories were reviewed – Cllrs agreed to remove Charlotte Hornsby, this cannot be actioned until the next meeting when the minutes are signed

(iv) Presentation of 2024/25 accounts - the Clerk presented the accounts for 2024/25 (previously circulated) and noted these will be made available for public inspection (v) Bank Reconciliation – the

closing bank balance at the end of the financial year 31 Mar 2025 was £12,059.02 as noted at the March meeting. The balance as at 2 June 2025 is £16,161.64 which includes receipt of precept £4,500 less cheques cleared Chq 331 £180.58 Clerks Pay & Expenses Jan–Mar 25, Chq 330 £108.80 HMRC PAYE Jan-Mar 25 & Chq 332 Spanglefish £108. Chq 334 for the hire of WRC remains uncleared.

(vi) Report from Internal Auditor - Lyn Fisher (LF) has audited the 2024/25 accounts and completed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). LF's report reads as follows: "Thank you for again inviting me to look over the accounts and minutes of Exmoor Parish Council. The minutes, accounts and record keeping are very efficiently maintained – and show clearly the business of, and decisions taken by, the Parish Council during the year. I am very happy to sign off against the control objectives in the internal audit." (vii) Clerk explained that LF would like a donation to be made to the British Red Cross again – all Cllrs agreed to donate **£60** to the **British Red Cross Chq 338**.

(viii) Approval and Signature of 2024/25 accounts and bank reconciliation – all Cllrs agreed that the accounts and bank reconciliation were a true and correct record and should be adopted. Chair and Clerk signed.

50/25 Audit - Certificate of Exemption: all Cllrs approved and authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign the document

- Total annual gross income for the authority 2024/25 £4500;
- Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2024/25 £2265

51/25 Section 1 of Audit: Annual governance statement 2024/25 – all Cllrs approved and authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign the document

52/25 Section 2 of Audit: Accounting statements 2024/25 – all Cllrs approved and authorised the Chair to sign the document

53/25 Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Financial Regulations & Aims and Objectives: (Previously circulated) The Cllrs reviewed the policies and agreed no amendments were necessary

54/25 Highways: (i) Salt Bin – RF suggested that the salt bags could be disguised using wooden panelling rather than purchasing new salt bins – cost comparison to be discussed at next meeting. (ii) Simonsbath bridge has been hit – Clerk to report, along with the "saplings" which are now small trees

55/25 Parish Maintenance – the annual weedkilling and road sign cleaning will need to be arranged soon

56/25 Correspondence – all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs.

57/25 Report from Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust – Still waiting for the kitchen and exhibition hanging equipment to be installed. WRC has been hired for one week in June for another book launch.

58/25 Report from other groups including Exmoor LCN, Exmoor National Park Forum, Henry Leigh Trust – the AGM of the LCN will be this coming Thurs. The National Park Forum (which replaced the Consultative Forum) has been cancelled due to costs and officer time, ENPA will hold an annual meeting instead. The HLT was encouraged to see applications from new young people. The next closing date is 31st August.

59/25 Chair's Notices – none

60/25 Items for next Agenda – salt bins/bags

61/25 Date and time of next meeting: 31st July 2025

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.14pm.

Signed.....Date.....