



### **Clerk's Report 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025**

- 1) Cllr Willasey-Wilsey met with John Nicholson, Assistant Highway Service Manager at Somerset Council to discuss services in future in light of the new “Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme” and the following was noted from conversations:
  - a) It seems that we can continue to expect the grass verges to be cut once a year during the growing season.
  - b) Gully maintenance is currently on a 2 year maintenance schedule, however in the light of the Section 19 report, it could be changed to once a year, once the report is finalised, given the threat to property. We need to keep an eye on this and push for them to be cleared/maintained annually.
  - c) Potholes. They should be reported, and once assessed, the Council will repair them if they think they are bad enough and pose a threat to life/property. Coincidentally, I heard on the news yesterday that the Government had allocated each Council an amount specifically to be spent on potholes.
  - d) Drains will be maintained if the blockage or damage to them poses a threat to life/property. Clearly anything under roads will be down to them.
  - e) The free training offered to communities such as ourselves to do things like sign cleaning, clearing gullies etc. may be open to SM Parish even though it is not part of the pilot scheme which is currently running. However we need to check the Parish Council insurance to make sure it is covered if someone is hurt in the process.
  - f) If volunteers were trained and organised by SM Parish Council to clear gullies or to clean road signs, an application to Somerset Council for a Section 171 permit would be required and the Council would have to organise the traffic management. A road closure would incur considerable costs.
- 2) An email was received with information regarding the “Better Buses for Somerset” scheme, which has been formed due to Somerset Council recently receiving around £6.4m in bus funding from the Government, which is the biggest annual amount of bus funding that Somerset Council has received for many years. Remote meetings are being held via Microsoft TEAMS every 3 months with bus users, stakeholder representatives, Somerset Council transport managers and bus managers. Parish Councils are entitled to representation at these meetings and should contact Somerset Council Democratic Services at [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk), and ask to be represented at Bus Users & Stakeholders Group meetings. With key decisions on how to spend the Government bus funding, it has never been more important to ensure that your council has a seat at the table.
- 3) Shepton Montague PCSO, Amanda Ware (PCSO 7911), who is based at Wincanton Police Station, emailed to introduce herself and offered to meet in person if there are any issues we would like to discuss with her. I shall be inviting her to our Parish Meetings.

- 4) SALC Community Health & Wellbeing Grants – There is up to £35K available, completion of projects early April 2026. For more detail councillors can contact Fodo Higginson [HWBSupport@somerset-alc.org.uk](mailto:HWBSupport@somerset-alc.org.uk)
- 5) New clerk has not yet completed adding her name to the bank account
- 6) New clerk time sheets for councillors to note - total of 26 hours since starting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024, this is 6 hours over the agreed 10 per month and already 6 hours into this month.