

Clerk: clerk@sheptonmontagueparish.gov.uk

Date: 27 November 2026

MINUTES of the Shepton Montague Parish Council meeting held on Monday 16th November 2026 at 7.00pm in Shepton Montague Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Cllrs: Sykes (Chair), Willasey-Willsey, Watch

Clerk and RFO: Sam Mainstone

Somerset Councillors: Cllr Tom Power , (Lucy Trimnell joined mid-meeting)

Parish members: 3: including Zoe Young (The Newt representative) and John Dimond (Planning application applicant)

Meeting started at 7:00pm

Open discussion; Opportunity for parish members to comment on agenda items prior to the start of the meeting.

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened for public discussion, offered for MOP to discuss any issues.

Mr Dimond attended to summarise the planning application – Agenda item 26/68 1 & 2. This item will be brought forward on the agenda to accommodate Mr Dimond's attendance.

Representative from The Newt attended to summarise the planning application – Agenda item26/68 3, which will be discussed within the meeting.

Minutes

26/49; Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Apologies received from Cllr Williams.

It was RESOLVED [For-against-abstain] [3-0-0] to approve the apologies.

26/50; Declarations of interest.

Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the parish council's Code of Conduct and to

consider any written requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e) (this does not preclude any later dispensation).

None declared.

26/51; To approve and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th August 2026 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

It was RESOLVED [3-0-0] to approve the minutes dated 20th August 2026 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

The chair signed and dated the minutes.

26/52; To receive councillor application and consider co-option and to approve/authorise councillor access to Parish Council bank account.

It was RESOLVED [3-0-0] to co-opt Ranald Leigh, who was welcomed as a new councillor for Shepton Montague Parish Council. Cllr Ranald Leigh signed the acceptance of office and joined the meeting.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to authorise access to the Unity Trust Bank account and provide signatory access to the council's bank account.

Agenda items brought forward:

26/68; Planning items; To note the planning applications received since the last meeting, which can be found on the website here:

1. **Date registered: Thursday, 29 October 2026**

Applicant: John Dimond

Location: Land OS 7459 Bratton Seymour Road Bratton Seymour Wincanton Somerset

Reference: 26/02250/FUL – Formation of an additional fishing lake and erection of an agricultural storage barn.

Comment:

Closing date for comments 19th November 2026.

2. **Date registered: Thursday, 15 October 2026**

Applicant: John Dimond

Location: Land OS 7459 Bratton Seymour Road Bratton Seymour Wincanton Somerset

Reference: 26/02251/FUL – Change of use of the land for the siting of 8 No. glamping pods, 1 No. mobile hub and the construction of a swimming lake to form a wellness retreat.

Comment: Closing date for comments 5th November 2026.

Mr Dimond attended this evening to engage with cllrs regarding both of the above planning applications. Mr Dimond gave a summary of his plans to build upon his current fishing lake

business to develop a Health & Wellbeing retreat with glamping pods, in partnership with someone who specialises in Health & Wellbeing. The applications include plans for a new agricultural barn, which will be sustainably built and will be better situated for its purpose, unlike the previous farmyard barn that was transformed into housing.

The additional lake will sit above 2 existing lakes, for tench fishing.

Q&A:

- Why?
    - At 120 acres, from a commercial perspective, this is not big enough to function purely as an agricultural business and there has been significant financial challenge. Agricultural farmers are encouraged to diversify and this is part of Diversification.
- What size are the glamping pods?
    - 2 x 3/4m. There will also be a shower block.
    - A remote location becomes challenging for utilities. There is currently no power on-site, but over the last 10 years the industry of powering things remotely with battery/solar has become less of a barrier. Cllrs noted there are no solar panels on plans. They will be powered by wood burners and batteries and will be low impact.
    - One lake will be purely for swimming, and visitors will be able to use the shower and toilet block.
    - There are currently 3 fishing lakes, but the plan is for 4 lakes , one used for wild swimming as part of the Health & Wellbeing retreat. The lakes are fed from a spring at Bratton Seymour. The farm is clay which is very suited for this purpose.
    - The lakes are all in Bratton Seymour parish, just the barn is within the Shepton Montague parish.
- Has there been dialogue/pre-planning advice? Why remove a barn previously (turning into housing) and then build another one?
    - A Pre Planning application was submitted with some consultation. The Planning Department are aware of the overall strategy as they have been part of the planning applications so far.
    - There was no issue raised regarding the previous conversion of a barn into housing followed by plans for a new barn. The new barn position will be much more suited to its purpose.
    - The barn will be a simple storage facility for agricultural purposes/tools.
- How will the shower block waste be managed in view of phosphate issues?
    - Package treatment plant for discharge or there is opportunity to pay authority for discharging into the watercourse. Authority utilises these funds for upgrading other older systems in the area – Carbon off-setting.

- What is the plan for the barn long-term – is there a plan to turn this barn into a house?

    - Not currently. A barn is needed for the agricultural business and this will be built and used as one. There are no long-term aspirations.
- Will there be earthworks moved away from site during works?
    - No, all will be used for landscaping and this is encouraged by contaminated land specialists, with an incentive to leave it onsite.
- Are the glamping units portable?
    - Yes, this is a requirement. The units are mounted on screw poles with low impact ground works and will be clad. The shepherds hut is the toilet block which will also be portable in the same way as required.

The business will be managed by a Health & Wellbeing professional with Mr Dimond managing the build and development side of the business.

Mr Dimond was thanked for his engagement this evening and left at 7:22pm
SMPC have no objections, but would like to see the recommendations from both Highways & the LLFA met in full

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to support these applications with comments to assure that professional requirements are met. Chair to word the response with the clerk.

26/53; To receive the Clerk's report and to note any recommendations.
Clerk summarised, noted by all.

26/54; To consider invitation from The Bruton Town Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Group to become involved with Act to Adapt plan supported via Somerset Wildlife Trust.
Cllrs are all in favour of engaging with Bruton Town Council's Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Group and the Somerset Wildlife Trust on the 'Act to Adapt- Bruton and beyond'. There will be a launch date on 1st Feb which will be a workshop, followed by further workshops in the surrounding areas.

Chair to respond to Cllr Jones and to connect with Hannah Phillips from the SWT.

It was RESOLVED[4-0-0] to support the Act to Adapt Plan and to become involved.

26/55; To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.
Cllr Trimnell will be late due to a meeting clash and can update us on her arrival.

Cllr Power apologises for not sending the November report yet, but this will follow. Highlights are as follows:

- £23.9 million overspend
- Children's commissioner rated Somerset the 11th most challenging place for children to grow up – EHCP's have failed deadlines with a major backlog. There is not enough funding for youth services.
- Section 151 Officer is challenging positions and scrutinising effectively.

- New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes in August have taken powers away from councillors. There will be very low number of applications reaching committee, as the committee process is considered less effective since the new NPPF, and decisions now sit with officers with delegated authority.

The Chair raised that an LCN Highways meeting that recently took place, which was attended by a parish representative. It is frustrating that Somerset Council are unable to provide a map of the drains in the parish to assist with successful reporting of blocked drains. The Clerk also attended the meeting and is still awaiting a promised TEAMS meeting to raise this issue. Cllr Power will look into this as he has access to the Somerset Intelligence maps which may be suitable.

The cost for children to attend SEN schools was queried by Cllr Watch, Cllr Power will follow this up via email.

26/56; To consider forming a footpaths working group with newly co-opted councillor as lead.
Cllr Leigh is invited to lead a footpaths working group with engaged members of the community who are keen to become involved. The Clerk detailed the informal nature of a working group. Cllr Leigh will give this some consideration and this item is deferred to the next meeting. Chair stated that Vanessa Stubbs has offered to assist with any footpaths project.

26/57; Horns Lane surface repair.
To receive an update from Cllr Sykes.

The LCN Highways meeting has still not provided any answers.

Cllr Leigh suggested approaching a contractor for consideration of repair works, however, the Clerk confirmed that works are not possible without Highways consultation as this lane is an adopted highway.

The clerk suggests using the Somerset Council online reporting tool as the next step, with all encouraged to report the same item to encourage action.

At 8pm Cllr Trimnell arrived.
Apologies for being late. A few things to report:

- Citizens space on Somerset Council website; there are two very important ongoing consultations that Cllr Trimnell would encourage all to view and comment, which relate to family support issues and Veterans services. Information can be viewed via the website and has been circulated in the recent briefing paper from Somerset Council.

26/58; New GDPR legislation:
a) To review Digital Compliance checklist and note actions to date.
b) To approve the following policies/procedures:
    a. Privacy Notice.
    b. Data Protection Policy

c. Retention Policy
d. Data Breach Procedure
e. DPIA form
f. Subject Access Request information

This item was deferred for the next meeting. Cllrs will need to approve the recommended documentation for the website inline with renewed legislation.

26/59; To review the following policies:

a) Code of Conduct
b) Standing Orders
c) Risk Assessment and Management
d) Financial Regulations
e) Asset Register

Deferred for approval at the next meeting. Cllrs will review Policies in the meantime.

26/60; To consider quotes received:

a) Migration to gov.uk emails for councillors; 2 quotes for consideration.

The Clerk summarised the need for councillors to change to non-personal email accounts, in line with legislation, and recommends Parish online as the new provider for both email accounts and website hosting and support, for reasons of compliance, accessibility and pricing.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to migrate to gov.uk emails for all councillors with Parish online.

b) Website Hosting and support; 2 quotes for consideration.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve quote from Parish online for website hosting and support.

26/61; To note and approve clerk's Q2 Payroll summary, subsequent payment and hours of work to date since last meeting.
Noted by all.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve the clerk's Q2 payroll summary, subsequent payment and hours of work to date since the last meeting.

26/62; To note the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) salary scales for parish and town clerks effective from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027;

a) To consider 3.3% increase to clerk's salary, with a new hourly rate of £14.36 (SCP8)

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve a 3.3% increase to the clerk's salary.

b) To consider backdated salary (total of 58 hours for Q1 and Q2) increase from 1st April 2026, to be included in Q3 salary.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve backdated salary increase from 1st April 2026 to be included in Q3 payroll.

26/63; Changes to the Annual and Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2027/28

To receive brief summary from Clerk as circulated in the meeting papers. To note and support the forthcoming preparations during 2026/27 to ensure compliance for the 2027/28 AGAR.

Noted by all.

26/64; Finance:

a) To consider budget to date.

Noted by all.

b) To approve invoices and payments since last meeting (circulated in meeting papers)

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve the payments since the last meeting.

c) To approve transfer of remaining funds following expenditure from following earmarked reserves into General Reserves:

a 20mph speed campaign

b SID (CIL FUNDS)

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to transfer remaining funds from the projects into general reserves.

d) To approve and sign bank reconciliations since last meeting.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve and sign the bank reconciliations since the last meeting.

The chair signed the bank reconciliations.

26/65; To consider and approve the 2027/28 Budget Proposal and note the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) recommendations.

Cllrs would like to maintain precept level at the same level last year – i.e. no inflationary element, adding to S137 budget line.

It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to approve the proposed budget with the above amendments.

26/66; Road safety campaign:

a) To note the final works have been completed by Somerset Council for the 20mph speed limit and the invoice has been paid.

Noted.

b) To receive Speed Indicator Device recommendations from Sparkford Parish Council and decide next steps.

Recommendation was to go for solar powered device, to avoid the need to re-charge batteries on a regular basis.

Clerk to obtain a quote from contractor for changing position regularly. To return to next meeting with updated quote. The Chair will obtain a quote from Highways for installation.

26/67; To consider water level readings and flooding prevention planning.
Deferred to next meeting.

26/68; Planning items; To note the planning applications received since the last meeting, which can be found on the website here:

Items 26/68 1. And 2. Were discussed earlier in the meeting.

3. **Date registered: Wednesday, 7 October 2026**

Applicant: Mr Paul Rawson

Location: Land OS 3426 Hadspen Estate Bratton Seymour Wincanton Castle Cary Somerset BA7 7NG

Reference: 26/00156/FUL – Erection of new ecosphere structure to house succulent plant collection together with related services and visitor facilities, as an extension to the existing visitor attraction at The Newt in Somerset; associated access, landscape and drainage works, including temporary construction access from Cary Edge Lane.

Comment: Closing date for comments 28th October 2026.

The representative from the Newt, Zoe Young, gave a summary of this planning application:

Although the application is live, in 2 weeks' time there will be new information submitted; Access is being re-routed to avoid the ancient woodland altogether. There are some other minor changes which Zoe will forward a summary of once ready. As soon as planning has been secured, works will start, and the construction phase is anticipated to take around two years.

26/69; To discuss agenda items for next meeting.
As above.

26/70; To reconsider next 12 month meeting schedule proposal (always second Monday of the month):
Monday 11th January, Monday 15th March (Annual Parish Meeting followed by Council meeting), Monday 17th May (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council[1]), Monday 14th June (Annual Parish Meeting), Monday 8th November.

Meetings will now be held on a Monday to accommodate the new councillor.

Noted and approved by all.

26/71; Date of next meeting Monday 11th January 2027, please forward any agenda items to the clerk by 28th December 2026.
Noted and approved by all.

Meeting ended at 9:15pm

Signed

S Mainstone, Parish Clerk, on behalf of the Council

27 November 2026

[1] Due to Pre- Election period the Annual Council meeting must take place between Monday 14th May – 24th May 2027