

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 21 May 2025 at the Tithe Barn, Fitzhead commencing at 7.30 pm.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Chris Summers (Chair), Cllr. Alison Kent, Cllr. Ian Coombes, Cllr. Wendy Jonas and Cllr. Martin Irish (from item 25/04).
Attending: Andrea Johnson (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.
Absent: None

Public Speaking Time: No questions were raised.

- 25/01 Election of Chairman and receipt of the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Summers was unanimously **elected** as Chairman, and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was countersigned by the Clerk.
Proposed: Cllr Kent **Seconded:** Cllr Jonas
- 25/02 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate**
None
- 25/03 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.**
None
- 25/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2025 were **approved** and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.
- 25/05 Matters Arising from the meeting on 12 February 2025**
25/05.1 Cllr Summers had spoken to a building firm for an indication of the cost of repointing the Pumphouse and repair of the roof and wall. The Clerk highlighted that depending on the cost 3 quotes might be required. The possibility of grant funding was noted, given the age and historical nature of the property. **Action:** Cllr Summers will source alternative quotes.
- 25/05.2 It was noted that the grass verge alongside the Tithe Barn had been cut by the Church. The brambles still required cutting back.
- 25/06 Tithe Barn Management Committee**
A quantity of free chairs and tables had been acquired. Any surplus will be re-sold.
- 25/07 Play Area, Defibrillator and Pump House**
There were no matters to note from the weekly inspection reports since the previous meeting. The condition of the gate posts is to be monitored. Birds have been fouling the toddler swings. It was agreed to add cable ties to the top of the swings.
Action: Clerk to re-circulate the inspection rota. Cllr Coombes to add cable ties to the swings.
- Cllr Coombes mentioned that the torch for the defibrillator was not working.
Action: Cllr Coombes to log with Community Heartbeat.
- The Annual Inspection Report for the Play Area was noted. The chain on the traverse was discussed. It was agreed to discuss replacement equipment at the August meeting.
- It was **resolved** to appoint the Play Inspection Company to carry out the 2025 inspection at a cost of £94.95'. **Action:** Clerk to advise the inspector.

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25/08 Highway matters

It was noted that until such time as Somerset Council agreed what the Parish Council was allowed to do, it was not possible to proceed with the hedge cutting. SALC had written to the Leader of Somerset Council, and a reply was awaited. There was another LCN Highways Sub-Group meeting in June where it was hoped an update would be provided.

25/09 Rights of Way

No work had been undertaken on the ditch and water was still flowing across the road. Footpath WG5/1 is currently dry and the issue with WG7/31 Dean Farm has been resolved.

25/010 Local Government and Policing

There was no Somerset Councillor present to give an update. The experience of a resident who had been the victim of fraudulent tradesmen was discussed. Councillors expressed concerns about the responsiveness of the PCSO.

25/011 Finance.

25/011.1 The Bank Reconciliation Statement at 30 April 2025 was noted. It was **resolved** that Cllr Jonas should sign.

Action: Cllr Jonas to check the bank statements against the reconciliation statement and confirm to the Clerk that she agrees the figures.

25/011.2 Expenditure against budget at 30 April 2025 was noted.

25/011.3 The following payments made since the previous meeting (contractual obligations) were verified:

Tithe Barn - hire	February meeting	£20.00
Richard Branfield	Apple Tree pruning	£240.00
Ionis	Domain registration	£12.00
Lloyds Bank	Bank charges	£8.50

25/011.4 It was unanimously **resolved** to pay the following payments, totalling £1538.66. As an overpayment £155.40 had been made to the Clerk in November 2024, this would be deducted from the amount due for March – May 2025.

Clerk Salary	March – May 2025	569.92
HMRC	PAYE	142.40
Community Heartbeat	Defibrillator support	162.00
SALC	Annual membership fee	120.41
Jill Larcombe	Internal Audit fee	50.00
Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited	Annual Insurance Premium	493.93

25/011.5 The Year End Accounts 2023/24 were unanimously approved.

25/011.6 The comments in the Internal Audit Report were noted.

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- 25/011.7 It was noted that as the Council's income and expenditure for the year 2024/2025 was less than £25,000, the Council was entitled to claim exemption from the limited assurance review. It was unanimously resolved to claim exemption and the certificate was signed by the Chair and Clerk.
Action: Clerk to advise the external auditors,
- 25/011.8 The Chairman read out the assertions in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 and the Council resolved each response. The statement was then signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- 25/011.9 The Accounting Statements on the Annual Report agreed with the Year End figures. The Chair and Clerk signed off the accounts.
- 25/012 **Planning**
It was noted that planning applications 17/25/0003 and 17/25/0003LB had been received. **Action:** Clerk to circulate details and the councillors to arrange a site visit.
- 25/013 **Digital compliance**
The SAPPP Guidance for 2025/2026 for domain, email addresses and website was noted. These require immediate upgrades to the email system, website accessibility, and the introduction of an IT Policy to be able to give a positive response on the annual governance statement at the end of the year.

It was unanimously **resolved** that the Clerk should investigate a .gov.uk domain (fitzheadparishcouncil.gov.uk), along with email and website hosting from CloudNext IT.
Action: Clerk to contact CloudNext IT.
- 25/014 **Laptop:**
The Clerk was authorised to purchase a new laptop up to the budgeted amount.
Action: Clerk to arrange the purchase of a new laptop.

Milverton & Fitzhead Magazine
It was **agreed** that Cllr Jonas should submit details of the meeting to the magazine on behalf of the Parish Council, together with the date of the next meeting.
Action: Cllr Jonas to arrange
- 25/015 **Matters for information only**
There was a discussion about developments in a neighbouring parish, possible future planning applications and a noticeable increase in rooks in the village.
- 25/016 **Next quarterly meeting**
It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting on 13 August 2025.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed as a true and correct record by Cllr. Summers.....

Dated 13 August 2025.

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