

Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council
Held on Monday 19th May at 7.30pm in the Meare Community Church

Present: Cllrs Bennetts (CB), C Foster (CF), T Foster (TF), James (TJ), Neale (AN), Wren (AW), Field (JF) Winter (VW).

In attendance:
Parish Clerk – Liz Horne (LH)
Cllr Shearer (HS)– Somerset Council (SC)
+ 17 members of public

Public participation

15. Apologies for absence. (LGA 1972 s85 (1))
Apologies were received from Cllr Hoskins (NH).

16. Declarations of Interest
VW expressed that she has an interest in planning at Batch House, 11 St Marys Road. No further

17. Election of Chairperson- Cllr TF proposed Cllr CB. Cllr AN 2nd.

18. Declaration and acceptance of office by the Chair- Cllr Bennetts completed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office statement.

19. Election of Vice Chairperson –Cllr AN proposed Cllr TF, Cllr CB 2nd.

20. Declaration and acceptance of office by the Vice-Chairperson- Cllr T Foster completed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office statement.

21. Minutes
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th April 2025 having been previously circulated and considered a true and accurate record of the previous meetings and were signed by the Chair. Proposed by TF and 2nd AW. **MOTION CARRIED.**

22. Finances

- a. LH circulated annual accounts up to the end of April 2025 along with bank statements prior to the meeting. Proposed Cllr TF and 2nd Cllr AN. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- b. LH circulated a list of invoices prior to the meeting for councillors' consideration. Proposed by TF and 2nd AN. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- c. Precept funds have been received
- d. Review of AGAR return -
 - i. Annual Internal Audit Report was reviewed and approved by the council. **MOTION CARRIED.**
 - ii. The Annual Governance Statement was reviewed and approved by the council. All councillors agreed with the statements read out at the meeting. **MOTION CARRIED.**
 - iii. The Accounting Statements were reviewed and approved by the council. **MOTION CARRIED.**
 - iv. The Clerk announced The notice of Exercise of Public Rights would be displayed 9th June 2025 to 14th July 2025.

CB

23. Summary of outstanding actions from previous meetings:

See appendix A

24. County Councillor report

- a. SC AGM is on Wednesday 21st May. Budget has been agreed and SC came in on budget for last year which included 11 sets of accounts.
- b. Final structure for SC completed.
- c. Main challenges for SC are:
 - i. IT systems for Council tax. Merging 4 systems into 1.
 - ii. 35 million gap in budget for staffing costs. 550 jobs were taken out but those who left went mainly via voluntary redundancy. There are now shortages and recruitment is ongoing for Planning Officers, Housing Officers, Social Care, Special Educational Needs.
 - iii. There are currently 636 children in care, 25 to 30 of those need foster care families as currently in residential care.

25. Planning:

Notifications only:

- a. Batch House, 11 St Marys Road, Meare. Cllrs C Bennetts, T Foster, A Neal, A Wren and V Winter met at the property with the owners to discuss 4 properties proposed on the plot. LH submitted MPC support for this planning application.

26. Highways

- a. LCN – See appendix B
- b. Muddy Lane – No Parking sign has been painted on the lay-by road surface to remind people that this is a passing place not a car parking area.

27. Parish Matters including:

- a. Play area
 - i. VW confirmed that she has added MPC to the Tesco's 12 month waiting list to receive a grant.
 - ii. Fencing repairs – LH circulated a spread sheet showing 3 quotes received.

ACTION: The Playing Field Committee need to assemble at the Play Area and review what is needed for the whole area.

- iii. Removal of post that was a hazard to children running into it - now completed.
- b. Football pitch update.

ACTION: TF/TJ to coordinate dates to remove the football posts.

- c. Allotments update – Cllr TJ advised that the hedge that was removed has now grown back and needs maintaining and will need to be maintained prior to piping the ditch.

ACTION: LH to liaise with David Naylor and Keith Brandham regarding dates for a meeting with MPC.

ACTION: Internal drainage board to meet with AN and gain permission for the ditch to be piped.

- d. SALC Health and Wellbeing – Grant received was £5000.00 and budget submitted at a predicted £7500.00. £1500 budgeted for food but only cost £900 with profits going to the school. £600 profit made on the BBQ and was gifted towards the Village Hall fund. The Bar was run by Meare and Westhay Fund Raisers – profits raised went towards the shortfall in the costs of event. Further shortfalls in the cost of the event were covered by a donation from the ice cream man that was on site for the day. Performers were paid a token amount and budgeted £1250 but cost £600.00. TJ thanked Village Hall Trustees, Joe Dugdale, Ladies Group, Caroline Sanderson. TJ read out feedback from mother of autistic entertainer "Dante", thanking everyone for including her son and how much he enjoyed it.

CB

Head count and age demographic is requested by SALC and was carried out by Stewards. Head count was 475 people and they hit the target for demographic age groups. SALC training dates- AW attended. MPC applied for the grant for the Health and Wellbeing event and AW suggested that the Meare and Westhay Fundraising Team reflected this on the comments on their website and FaceBook page. AW also requested that the report to go back from SALC is reviewed by MPC before its submitted and believes it should be submitted within a month.

ACTION: TJ to forward the SALC report to LH to circulation to MPC to read before it is sent to SLAC.

e. Fly Tipping- The items disposed of at the Picnic area were removed by Caroline Sanderson.

ACTION: LH to establish who owns the land where the picnic area is.

28. Correspondence

a. Joe Dugdale has resigned from the Parish Magazine

ACTION: LH to advertise the vacancy for the Parish Magazine Editor on the FB page and on our website.

b. Email received from Paul Bradley about the tractor and mower. Cllr TF confirmed that all repairs have now been made.

c. Carol Cronshaw from West Monkton Parish Council, wrote to thank MPC for their support and taking a plaque on the Commonwealth War Memorial.

d. Poppy T event, afternoon tea is to be reinstated- Save the date 26th October

ACTION: Cllr JF to add Poppy T Event to the Website.

29. Next meeting will be on 16th June 2025, 7.30pm in Meare Community Church.

Chris Bent

Appendix A

Ongoing Actions

Action number	ACTION	Date	Assigned to	Date Completed	Notes
1	All councillors to forward any records/dates of training already completed to LH and LH to initiate a training record for Councillors. Ongoing		ALL		Clrs NH, CB, AW sent details
2	5 fence posts from Muddy Lane into the play area behind the swings need replacing. LH to check if there is enough in the budget to cover and gain quotes	20.01.25	LH		email to contractor and cc Qlr Winter to request a price and for them to liaise/arrange to meet between them. Play area budget for 24/25 = £400 but spend is £9.5K. Budget for 25/26 £1k but £500 is for service of zip wire so not sure where funds will come from for these repairs. 26.02.25 Qlr James emailed to say repairs to fencing now urgent. Contacted Jack- contractor doing playing field fencing. He will quote on Friday. Also emailed Toby Moon and asked him to quote, cc'd Victoria and Teresa. Teresa advised that Steve, from the allotments is doing a quick fix up job until proper repairs done. 07.05.25 2 quotes for fence repairs received and 2 further quote requests sent out today
3	LH to collate information on when defibs are available to be added to the Parish Magazine and website.	20.01.25	LH		Email to Qlr Gage 12.02.25 to ask where info for defibs can be found or if she has it. Requested assistance with locations and "what 3 words" 14.02.25 Qlr LG forward some info, to be actioned by LH. 02.04.25 Qlr LG now left and new guardian to assist will collating info. 28.04.25 LH emailed out a form to VW and Helen for them to complete so LH can collate all defib info in one place
ACTIONS from meeting 17.02.25					
4	TJ to explore what repairs can be made at the allotments by the allotment holders and also explore any grants that may be available to facilitate required repairs to the allotments.	17.02.25	TJ		14.04.25
5	LH to contact the Housing association re the space outside the allotments needing attention.	18.02.25	LH	27.02.25	Housing association is Stonewater. 21.02.25 LH submitted an online enquiry form via Stonewater website. 26.02.25 Stonewater request photos and a marked map to show area. Email sent to Qlr James to request assistance. 27.02.25 photos and map sent to Stonewater. 04.03.25 Stonewater confirmed that have forward my enquiry to their Neighbourhoods team. 02.04.25 LH chased housing association 10.04 housing association who apologised for not getting in touch and advised that Gary Henwood would respond within 5 days 28.04.25 LH chased up again. Response stated we should hear something within 5 working days - 07.05.25 latest. 12.05.25 LH chased Housing assoc again.
ACTIONS from meeting 17.03.25					
6	TF to provide feedback to Parish Clerk Liz Horne (LH) on investment execution	17.03.25	TF/LH		Discussed at meeting 14.04.25 and agreed it will be progressed after the audit is completed.
7	TJ to coordinate the repainting project of the goal posts at the playing field	17.03.25	TJ		14.04.25 ongoing. TJ needs help to lift the goalposts to enable her to paint.
8	LH to liaise with AN for a drainage quote. At the allotments	17.03.25	AN/LH		24.03.25 email to AN to ask what I need to do 26.03.25 AN advised he and another councillor would salvage some pipes from the peat fields and place at the allotments. AN to confirm once completed. See action 13.
ACTIONS from meeting 14.04.25					
9	TF and AW to forward their suggested amendments for the Statement of Intent relating to the Village Hall to TJ. TJ to make amendments and circulate. Once all in agreement, LH to contact SALC and ask if document should have legal oversight before it is signed.	14.04.25	TF/AW/TJ/LH		
10	LH to contact Wessex Water regarding the ditch that MPC is proposing to fill at the allotments. It is thought the ditch belongs to Wessex Water. MPC would like to pipe the ditch	14.04.25	LH		Email sent to Customer Services@BWSL.co.uk and sloan@wessexwater.co.uk 28.04.25 along with all related paperwork received from MAA. Sloan email no longer active, email bounced back 07.05.25 LH emailed MAA members to ask for Water Bill info to pass on to Wessex Water so that they can correctly locate the area concerned. OMPC with outcome of call and await further instructions. 12.05.25 AN will contact Somerset Water Consortium to ask them to advise.
11	LH to contact MAA Chair and request a meeting to discuss proposed changes plus request the waiting list falls under the Clerks remit. LH to receive any requests for those wanting an allotment to add anyone waiting.	14.04.25	LH	13.05.25	13.05.25 LH emailed MAA and await dates plus the waiting list.
12	LH to write letters of thanks to Tom Francis, Ben Thompson (the installation electrician), Chris Francis no 1 Sulfeway Farm, Livewest Homes Limited, 1 Wellington Way, Skypark, Exeter, EX5 2FZ (company who Ben works for)	14.04.25	LH		24.04.25 email to Qlr's to ask if Tom and Chris Francis are a couple. 24.04.25 letter sent to Ben via email. 24.04.25 email to Ben to ask for name of manager so that I can write to say thank you. Qlr CF to advise LH on exactly who to write letters to?
13	LH to review the budget and any reserves that may be available to purchase a defib for installation at Kirkgate	14.04.25	LH	12.05.25	to be reviewed after the annual audit. Finance Committee meeting on 12.05.25. 13.05.25 Reserves list circulated to Clrs with agenda for 19.05.25
14	Advert for 2 x Parish Councillors needed with Job Description and Personal Specification	14.04.25	LH/CB		
15	TJ to ask Meare School if their car park can be used on the day of the Health and Wellbeing	14.04.25	TJ		
ACTIONS FROM Playing Field Committee Meeting 25.04.25					
16	CF to purchase a piece of pipe to cover the spring on the gate by the disabled space	25.04.25	CF		
17	TJ to paint the side of the garage white ready for 17.04.25	25.04.25	TJ		

Chris Beard

Appendix B – MPC Highways and LCN updates 19.05.25

LCN Meetings Update 19/05/25

Since the April PC Meeting I have attended an Avalon and Poldens LCN Meeting, a Health and Wellbeing Working Group and a Highways Working Group.

LCN Meeting 23.04.25


- Cllr Theo Butt Phillip, Lead Member for Transformation, Human Resources and Localities attended the April LCN Meeting. He gave an update on the devolution of assets from Somerset Council. Further information is available at Somerset Council – Our land a property open data.
- We had an update from the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and the Step, Ride, Thrive Pilot and Highways.
- Avon and Somerset Police were unable to attend so Cllr Heather Shearer who is the Chair of the Police and Crime panel at Somerset explained that the panel holds the Police and Crime Commissioner accountable, ensuring the public's views are reflected in policing priorities and decisions. Heather told us that building public confidence in the police was a key priority, along with the panels role in responding to issues raised by the community.

Health and Wellbeing Working Party 29.04.25

- We had an update from Natalie about the Step, Ride Thrive Project and I put Meare Parish name down for a Dr Bike Session where communities can have free bike check and maintenance advice
- I forwarded the information about the school On Your Bike sessions to Meare School.
- We had a discussion about the support that is available to parishioners on discharge from hospital and exploring opportunities to support people during cold weather, including provision of warm spaces.
- Footpath and Cycle Route Maintenance and community involvement in maintaining them was also discussed.

Highways Working Group 01.05.25

- We discussed the best way to report highway issues was to use the online portal where you will get a case number and you can check the status of your issue.
- Any road safety issues should be reported to Aileen the Traffic Engineer.
- White lines: it is up to PCs to report problems. There are planned inspections along major routes. White line maintenance in our parishes is on a schedule which could be every 3/4/5 years
- We had a presentation from a police officer about road safety.
- He told us that there are Neighbourhood Policing Officers for all schools who can deliver Road Safety intervention programmes – check online NH Policing School and post code
- Marked Speed Enforcement Vans do speed checks where data shows that there is a danger of people speeding happening.
- Lots of people don't wear a seatbelt. If you hit a wall at 30mph not wearing a belt you are more likely to die
- Fitting a dash cam is game changing advised to fit one as they provide recorded evidence of driving incidents.
- The police are using A1 cameras in a bid to reduce road deaths. The technology detects speeding, mobile phone use and seat belt violations. The aim is to improve public confidence in road safety measures. They have 500 sites and 13 officers. There have been 400 people killed on the roads in Somerset since 2003.



Invoices to be paid in May

Colin Foster	New signs for the Playing Field	02.04.25	44.43	
Liz Horne	May salary plus expenses	31.05.25	941.00	
Ripple	Payrole	31.05.25	10.00	Standing Order
HMRC	Employers NI Contribution	31.05.25	74.73	
Nest	Employers Pension contribution	31.05.25	11.86	
Malcolm Sweet	Village Maint-June	15.06.25	550.00	
SALC	Annual subs	10.04.25	655.42	
Colin Westover	Memorial Flowers	09.04.25	35.97	
Teresa James	Zipwire repair	08.04.25	17.19	
Community Church	Donation -room hire Jan to April inclusive	30.04.25	160.00	
Cowling Agriculture	Tractor service	23.04.25	180.00	
Valda Energy	Meare Playing Field Electricity	06.05.25	26.15	Direct Debit
Tristan Foster	Tractor Repairs and Yellow paint for road markings	06.05.25	423.97	
Adrian M Johnstone	Internal Audit 2025	12.05.25	190.00	
Chris Bennetts	Vase- Villager of the Year	12.05.25	34.98	
			3355.70	
WELLNESS EVENT				
Childrens World Charity	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- arts and crafts	07.04.25	161.35	
Owl Enlighting CIC	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event - owl	07.04.25	250.00	
Somerset Toiler Hire Ltd	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- toilet hire	07.04.25	396.00	
Daniel Small	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event - Graffiti art workshop	07.04.25	300.00	
EmPrint Ltd - Emprint and Signs	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Supply of Roadside event signs	09.04.25	242.02	
Mark Aylward (Starlite)	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Entertainment	06.05.25	100.00	
David Thomas Cullen (Back River Rats)	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Entertainment	06.05.25	200.00	
Georgina Sweet	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Entertainment	06.05.25	150.00	
S M Kerslake	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Design of leaflet and programme plus printing	06.05.25	150.00	
Teresa James	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event-Variou items	06.05.25	238.82	
Ricki Buckingham Music	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Entertainment	06.05.25	100.00	
Kamilla Wiacek	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Entertainment	06.05.25	50.00	
Moorvale Creative CIC	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event- Sound Engineer	06.05.25	300.00	
Mrs Hazel DeGregorio (Festival Lizards Ltd)	SALC Grant-Health and Wellbeing event - tents, gazebo and stewards	06.05.25	2000.00	
Mr G Mountstevens (Party Pals)	Bluey Mascot Hire	06.05.25	60.00	
Mrs K Munday	Traning Session in play area	06.05.25	50.00	
Kevin Davis	BBQ	17.05.25	30.00	
Meare and Westhay Ladies Social Club	Food	17.05.25	337.48	
			5115.67	VAT £116.15

