

MINUTES OF MEETING OF HARDINGTON MANDEVILLE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY
21st JANUARY 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions – Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status & any disability); Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.

Nancy Chapman, Parish Clerk

Present

Joanna Szmaj (Chairman), Robert Halls, Mark Pollock, Peter Higgins and Malcolm White.

In Attendance

Nancy Chapman, Mike Hewitson (Somerset Councillor) and 5 members of the public.

Before the meeting commenced there was an opportunity for the public to speak:

Anne Lunt spoke on behalf of the Garden Committee and the Hardington Players. Both committee's are keen to see a wifi provision at the Village Hall as many people feel this should be a standard provision nowadays. The VHC have discussed this before and unfortunately the cost of providing this is quite high. It was agreed that this should be discussed once again.

A parishioner mentioned that the area of grass around the Mandeville Arms Telephone box has started to get eroded by people parking on it. He asked if it was an option to put a chain-link fence on it. The clerk responded that if this was highways land it would probably need a license to put a chain-link fence or large stones on it. It was agreed to try and establish who the owner is to see what the options are. The PC commented that it was unusual for people to erode this grass give that this is a wide bit of road.

A parishioner asked the PC if they were aware of plans for 'multiple social housing' to potentially be located on land adjacent to 4 Hill End. The PC reply that this was the first they had heard of this. Cllr Hewitson agreed to make enquiries regarding this.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Robin Carpenter, Richard Beatson and Karen Dodge.

2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2024 (Already Circulated)**

A minor correction was made to a date in section 16), before the minutes were approved as correct records of the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

4. **MATTERS OF REPORT**

None.

5. **SOMERSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS (BY INVITATION)**

The Somerset Councillor's reports have been previously circulated. Cllr Hewitson stated that the Somerset Council budget for 2025-26 was available on the website and was available for public comment. There is still a large short-fall of funding and they have approach the government for further help on this.

6. PLANNING AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a) There were no planning applications received after publication of the agenda.
- b) Notification Only: Planning app: 24/02982/PAMB Proposal: Prior Approval Notification for the change of use of an agricultural building into 2no dwellinghouses Location: Holtens Broad Hill Applicant: Mr Robert Howes. While the application was for notification only, the Cllr Carpenter requested that the Parish Council may want to comment on this. The 4-bay calf-rearing barn was only built in November 2017, and it was thought that at no point in the last 7 years was it used for an agricultural business (the new legislation states that the barn must be used as an agricultural unit on 24th July 2024). The PC passed a resolution to comment on this application, stating that the barn was never used for an agricultural business and therefore the application should be refused.
- c) Cllr Halls reported that two new applications have now been approved by the Planning department including 1) App No 23/02285/REM the reserved matter for access, appearance, landscaping, layout for App No 23/02620/OUT Land north of Peach Tree Cottage and 2) App No: 22/03075/OUT Outline application for the erection of 1 No.dwelling at Lyatts Orchard.

7. HIGHWAYS

- a) Chris Turner distributed a spreadsheet highlighting a long list of potholes and road surface subsidence. While a few have been completed, a lot of them were labeled for 'future', implying there is currently no budget to repair them. Chris has found that the Somerset Council reporting tool quite challenging, as it quite often says 'completed' even when nothing has been done! Chris reported that the mud on Broad Hill has been very bad recently and it was thought that this was caused by Combe Farm vehicles.

8. FOOTPATHS

- a) Somerset County have now replaced the 3 stiles on path Y10/20 with footpaths gates.
- b) Somerset County also removed the top stile near Penn Lane (Y10/20). It is hoped that Somerset Council will also install a footpath gate here.
- c) Cllr Carpenter has asked the footpath officer to consider a footpath diversion on the bridge at Y10/45. The footpath starts on the south side of Chinnock brook, then goes over the bridge to the north side for 30 metres, before returning to the south side again! It would make more sense for the footpath to stay on the south-side and Cllr Carpenter has asked them to look into this.

9. PARISH ISSUES

- a) Following a mention of the removal of the 'almost-collapsed' Hardington Marsh Notice Board in the Messenger, no-one has been in touch with the Parish Council to request it stays. A resolution was passed to ask the Ranger to remove the notice board.
- b) Cllr Higgins has completed the Somerset Rivers Authority small grants scheme application ('Community Flood Action Fund'), for local flood risk reduction. He has proposed a scheme to help prevent Chinnock Brook floods around the footpath from North Lane to Moor lane, by re-enforcing the rivers banks. Following Councilor feedback, Cllr Higgins will submit the application form.
- c) Somerset Council have stated that the potential charge for 'Dog & Litter Bin Collections 2025/26' will be £338 + VAT for a single bin (once-a-week collection). The Parish Council then discussed the locations of the bins in Hardington. It was suggested that the Community Field might only need one large bin. It was also agreed that a further dog bin/litter bin placed elsewhere in the village might be a better option. It was decided to discuss this further at the next meeting.

10. COMMUNITY FIELD

- a) Following issues with a lack of grass cutting last year, it was agreed the clerk should gather alternative quotes for mowing the field this year.

11. FINANCE

- a) The Clerk reported that Lloyds bank have a reserve account with 1.0 gross interest, and that they also do an account with 32-day-notice (2.33%) and an account with 95-day-notice (3.52%). A resolution was passed to open a Lloyds 32-day-notice account and then following this, to close the two Nat West Bank accounts.
- b) The second version of the Hardington Mandeville PC 2025-26 budget was discussed. It was then decided to continue with the November proposal, and a resolution to approve a precept request of £17,500 was agreed. The Clerk agreed to submit this to Somerset Council.
- c) The Clerk reported that a new 'Internal Auditor' is required for the 2024-25 accounts. The Clerk agreed to contact an accountant for a quote.
- d) A resolution was passed to approve the new NALC rates for clerks salary (increase of 63p for 2024-25 backdated to April 24).
- e) It was agreed the Parish Council were happy for the Clerk to purchase a new PC laptop and also Microsoft Office as the current laptop needs repairing.
- f) A resolution was passed to pay the following invoices:

- S Ogden - Ranger fees November	£196.00
- S Ogden - Ranger fees December (£196.00 + £33.74 materials for footbridge)	£229.74
- N Chapman – Salary Oct-Dec & Expenses	£1,258.14
- Somerset Council Community Annual Premises Licence Fee	£70.00
- g) It was agreed to transfer £5000.00 from Hardington Mandeville Parish Council Nat West account to Hardington PC Lloyds bank account.

12. PARISH RANGER SCHEME

- a) The Ranger has repaired the footpath bridge by rectory lane, replaced a footpath sign at the top of the High Street, replaced the footpath sign in the churchyard, refilled the grit bin at the top of North Lane, strimmed in various places and unblocked a lot of drains!
- b) New tasks include removing the Hardington Marsh notice board, clearing the leaves around the Village Hall and unblocking drains at Hill End.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) A resolution was passed to support keeping Stroke services in Yeovil Hospital. It was agreed that the Clerk would reply to Adam Dance MP asking him how he would like the PC to respond to his letter.

14. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

The VHC raised £217 from the November coffee morning and £263 from the December one. The last film night raised £141. The next film night is 'Paddington in Peru'. The Village Hall electricity bill for November was £932 and the December one was £1068.

The Parish Council passed a resolution to support the VHC to provide Wifi in the Village Hall if it is feasible.

15. MATTERS OF REPORT & ITEMS OR NEXT MEETING

Chairman: None.

Councillors: Cllr White reported that the Village Bier has been returned to the village hall following its impressive refurbishment! He asked that an agenda item is included for February's meeting to discuss his request that the Bier should be stored in the Church if possible.

Clerk: None.

16. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING & CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8:50pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, 18th February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.