

Hinton St George Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2026, at St. George's Village Hall, Hinton St. George.

Present: Cllr E. Way, Cllr F. Voss, Cllr A. Barber, Cllr M. Herbert and Cllr I. Yorston.
Somerset Council was represented by Cllr Steve Ashton, and the Clerk was in attendance.

Members of the Public: 13

Representatives of Avon & Somerset Police: 3

1263. Public Forum: A member of the public represented a number of residents and raised concerns about expectations of community policing, citing a number of incidents which had occurred in recent weeks which were felt to indicate a clear escalation from a particular individual. This included an elderly resident being physically assaulted and another resident finding the individual inside their garden, despite the gates being closed, and later finding that they had been inside the house. Additional residents spoke to provide additional context, including concerns around vehicle offences and links to drug dealing in and around the village. Specific questions were addressed to the Policing representatives about how they tackle anti-social behaviour, and how they could improve communication with the community, as many residents directly involved in incidents had not received feedback on the reports they had submitted. PCSO Hickey was thanked for providing alarms to two concerned residents and for meeting with residents to hear their concerns, but overall it was felt that more support was needed to avoid these incidents escalating further. The Chair noted that the agenda item for community policing would be moved earlier to address the concerns raised in the Public Forum.

Another member of the public who had recently applied for the Councillor position expressed their unhappiness about the way the co-opting decision was made. They noted that the Chair had referenced knowing the other two candidates when explaining her reason for nominating them, and expressed that they felt this was a conflict. The Chair clarified that the comment was made to explain that she knew nothing about the third candidate beyond their application and statement which would suggest that they should be chosen above either of the other two, given the specific reasons which she had cited as relevant in nominating the two alternative candidates, whilst highlighting that all three candidates would bring positive attributes to the council. Although the Chair had asked the other Councillors for their comments and questions, there was no further input provided, which the unsuccessful candidate felt reflected poorly on the Council as a whole. The candidate requested that the co-opting process should be made more transparent. They further noted that no-one from the Council had followed up on the offer made to offer electrical support for the Green Street defibrillator. They also proposed that the Council should consider requesting a 1-way road system coming in from Merriott and out towards Lopen (or vice versa), noting that there were

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regular traffic bottlenecks and that traffic was a danger to cyclists. The Chair requested that the Clerk add this to next month's agenda for discussion.

Another member of the public noted that the kerb in Gas Lane was continually being damaged and repaired due to heavy deliveries and asked whether a weight restriction could be introduced. Cllr Barber noted that this wouldn't be possible as there would be no other way for deliveries to reach this area.

Another member of the public requested an update on the Conservation Appraisal and it was noted that this would be covered later in the meeting.

1264. Apologies for Absence: Cllr P. Lanham (personal), Cllr R. Haggerty (personal)

1265. Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The clerk confirmed receipt of the signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office from new Councillors Ian Yorston and Rob Haggerty following their recent co-option.

1266. Declarations of Interest: None.

1267. Minutes of last Meeting: The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20th July 2026 were approved by all present Councillors and signed by the Chair.

1268. Somerset Councillor Report: Cllr Ashton reported that the car park charging initiative which was trialled recently will now require further consultation and the proposed changes will be pushed back until the consultation process has been completed. Cllr Ashton noted that applications were encouraged for initiatives to reduce the effects of flooding, for which a £50m fund is available, noting that applications could include relevant requests from communities such as funding equipment at village halls if they are likely to be used as a place of safety during floods. Cllr Ashton noted that he was still standing in for Cllr Roundell Greene, who hopes to be able to attend the next meeting.

1269. To discuss community policing support.

Police Supervisor Hayley Harris and PC Scott attended the meeting with PCSO Hickey. They noted that the community policing covers a very large area, with their team currently being short-staffed, which creates challenges. They explained the process for reporting incidents:

- In an emergency, call 999
- For non-emergencies, call 101
- Report online at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk
- Report anonymously at www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Vehicle issues could also be reported to the DVLA as well as the police

They explained that incidents are triaged in order of severity, and noted that calls rather than visits are often made for non-emergencies to try and investigate and solve matters faster.

They noted that they couldn't comment on live investigations, but stressed the importance of having as much intel as possible and encouraged residents to submit reports for any incidents they witnessed or experienced. They explained that intel reports would only very rarely result in a response beyond acknowledgement.

When asked about increasing visible policing in the village, they noted that they are trying to

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get out as much as possible but this was made more difficult by staff shortages. They noted that they had met with Abri yesterday regarding the action being taken regarding their parking lot in the village and the next event in this regard is a court hearing in October. Although Abri were unable to attend this meeting, they will try to attend a future parish council meeting to engage further. The Chair noted the very strong feedback from the community on this matter and acknowledged this on behalf of the Parish Council. The Chair thanked all residents for their input and thanked the community policing team for attending the meeting.

1270. Clerk's Updates:

a) To note the rescheduling of the September meeting - The Clerk noted that the meeting had been rescheduled from 21 September to 10 September in order to ensure that there were sufficient signatories present, as well as ensuring that the meeting was quorate.

b) To present an update on the new banking options - The Clerk presented details of the proposed move of the Council bank accounts to Unity Trust, alongside the transfer of funds to the general reserve account, which will generate a substantial increase in interest. As Unity Trust has no limit on account signatories, it was proposed that all councillors (if willing) be added as signatories (either immediately or once the account was set up) to ensure that there are no future delays on payment approvals. The Clerk outlined the procedure for setting up the new accounts, which is expected to take a few weeks, and requested the necessary information from Councillors to add them as signatories. The two providers' accounts will run in parallel for the transition period.

c) To provide an update on the external audit process - The Clerk presented the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2026. The Council noted the conclusion of the audit and that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been published on 11 September 2026 in accordance with statutory requirements. The two specific matters raised by the External Auditor were discussed and actions agreed:

(i) Independence of the Internal Auditor:

The Council noted the auditor's feedback regarding internal auditor independence. The Clerk explained that the previous internal auditor had been reappointed for the 2025/26 financial year solely to ensure operational continuity during the Clerk's transition into the role.

- **Action Agreed:** The Council approved the Clerk's proposal to source and appoint a new internal auditor for the 2026/27 financial year. The Clerk will present candidates and the required evidence trail regarding independence at a future meeting.

(ii) AGAR Schedule 2 Corrections (Prior Year Totals):

The Council noted the requirement for amendments to the 2024/25 comparative figures on the AGAR submission. The Clerk explained that the discrepancy arose from a cheque issued at the end of 2024/25 which only cleared at the start of 2025/26, which had been misaligned across the financial years. The Clerk confirmed that the necessary adjustments have been made as advised by the external auditor, and that these amendments did not impact the final balance carried forward to 2026/27 with the final year-end balance being 100% correct.

- **Action Agreed:** The Clerk will ensure that any future unrepresented cheques

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are strictly accounted for within the correct financial year according to proper practices to prevent balancing errors on future AGAR returns.

d) To discuss next steps on the proposed emergency plan - The Chair highlighted the importance of securing community buy-in for the emergency plan and encouraged anyone interested to attend the planning meeting. Two dates were proposed for October but it was agreed these should be moved to November to avoid half-term clashes and ensure greater attendance. The Clerk will confirm the new date and ensure this is publicised. Cllr Ashton noted that SRA Engagement support is available to test the draft emergency plan to ensure its sustainability, and confirmed that funding could be requested for relevant aspects of the plan.

e) To discuss next steps on the Lopen Flood group and the involvement of Hinton St George - Hinton St George has been requested to identify 2-3 people willing to take on the responsibility of setting up road closed signs at the junction of the crossroads near Our Shop, to avoid cars driving through flood water which is then washed into houses. There would be two further road closure points in Lopen and Merriott, with the Council providing the necessary signs and training. It was agreed that volunteers would be encouraged (ideally living near the road closure point) and that the Clerk would investigate nearby storage options for the signage.

f) To present the Q1 financial report - The Clerk highlighted key aspects of the Q1 financial report (which is available on the website), including:

- (i) The move to a new website enables the clerk to update website content directly, with the new website and email address ensuring that the Council is Assertion 10 compliant. This was achieved at a much lower price than originally quoted.
- (ii) A great disappointment was the replacement of the heritage post box with a new solar-powered parcel solution. The Council received no prior consultation about the proposed change and despite fighting hard to stop this, the change went ahead regardless.
- (iii) Income included the first precept payment and the first portion of the VAT refunds.
- (iv) Expenditure included the Chapter 8 equipment purchases for the Lengthsman, savings on the website and insurance and a note that the external audit fee had not been budgeted for as this was not required in previous years. All other costs remained in line with the budget at the end of the first quarter.
- (v) A reconciliation on the Conservation Appraisal costs had been completed with an amount of £6,500 being set aside to cover fees and printing costs.

g) To confirm meeting dates for the remainder of 2026 and 2027 - it was agreed to hold this over to the next meeting.

1271. Highways and Footpath updates:

a) To receive an update on SID results - The Clerk reported on the period 1 August to 7 September 2026, noting that the average speed recorded was 19.9mph, with a top speed of 40mph recorded at 13:39 on 7 August. The total number of vehicles monitored during the period was 7,809.

b) To receive an update on repairs completed - In addition to ongoing maintenance, the Lengthsman has replaced the post on the triangle at the bottom of South Street, repaired the bench towards Dinnington, repaired the stile near the reservoir and strimmed the areas

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around the cross and at the end of West Street, for which a new “no parking” sign will be purchased. It was noted that the dog waste bin at Jubilee Lane is awaiting a new post (on order) and Cllr Barber has sourced wood for repairs to the defibrillator phone box repairs.

c) To discuss cleaning the stone path in Church Street to prevent slipping - To help avoid any further injuries being incurred, it was agreed that the Lengthsman would go ahead with cleaning the stone path.

1272. Planning applications under review:

a) No new planning applications received for review.

b) Decisions to note:

(i) **26/01588/HOU at 6 Teakettle Lane, Hinton St George, TA17 8SJ** - conversion of carport for use as a study and gym. Approved by the Parish Council. Approved by Somerset Council.

(ii) **26/01396/HOU at The Old Malthouse, High Street, TA17 8SE** - erection of a single storey rear extension and renovation works. Approved by Somerset Council.

(iii) **26/01502/LBC at End Cottage, Church Street, TA17 8SP** - proposed Removal of Cement Based Mortar to the South West and North West Elevations and Repoint with a Lime Based Mortar. Approved by Somerset Council.

(iv) **26/01351/HOU at 2 Hinton Close, TA17 8SH** - two-storey front extension and single-storey side extension to dwelling. Approved by Somerset Council.

(v) **26/01185/HOU at Blackmoor Cottage, TA17 8RZ** - Render over existing reconstructed stone faced south elevation. Approved by Somerset Council.

1273. Conservation and village matters

a) To provide an update on the Conservation Appraisal process - Cllr Way reported that Somerset Council is using Hinton St George as a test case to establish new protocol for other villages wishing to follow a similar Conservation Appraisal process. Once this protocol has been finalised, the draft report will be shared publicly on the website and with several printed copies being accessible for review. Residents who may be impacted by boundary changes will be notified directly prior to the release, and all electors will be sent a form requesting their feedback on the draft, for collation by the Clerk. Feedback received will be presented and discussed at the following Parish Council meeting, with a longer public forum proposed to accommodate any further comments from residents.

b) To provide an update on the Green St defibrillator electricity solutions - Cllr Barber confirmed that following concerns raised with SSE and highlighting the importance of the defibrillator service, which uses very little electricity, as well as support from Cllr Adam Dance, SSE had confirmed that they are looking into how best to support us and a few other organisations in similar positions. For now, SSE has provided us with a goodwill credit of £248.99 (already credited to our account), which will offset the increase in rates for the next 6 months, and hope to have another solution in place for us by the end of our current contract.

c) To provide feedback on the AED defibrillator training held on 15th August 2026 - Cllr Barber reported a very good turnout for the training with over 60 people attending. Cllr Barber expressed his thanks to Trainer Ashley as well as Rebecca Sly for their excellent

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training session and thanked all involved for their support. It is hoped this can be repeated in coming years.

d) To provide feedback on the Wessex Internet meeting - Cllrs Way, Barber, Voss and the Clerk had met with Wessex Internet who is bringing full fibre broadband to parts of Hinton St George in 2027, especially those areas hard to reach. This is part of the government-funded Project Gigabit contract providing broadband to communities across Dorset & South Somerset who hadn't yet been reached. Wessex Internet requests that anyone who is interested registers their interest (without any commitment) either online www.wessexinternet.com or by calling 0333 240 7997. If there is a lot of interest registered, it may help to speed up the process.

1274. Finance and Procedure

a) To appoint a Councillor to undertake quarterly checks of the Parish Council Accounts for 2026-27 - the Chair nominated Cllr Yorston for this role based on his financial experience. All Councillors were in agreement and Cllr Yorston accepted this role.

b) Review of the Receipts and Payments and verify bank reconciliations - the Clerk noted that the second precept payment and balance of VAT refunds had been received.

c) Invoices for payment to be considered and approved by Councillors prior to payment - Councillors approved the following payments:

SSE - £13.62

SSE - £14.08

St George's Hall - £11.00

Stag & Apple Ltd (verge clearing) - £216.00

Home & Garden Services - £1,802.71

HMRC - £316.00

Clerk's Salary - £475.00

Clerk's Reimbursement - £285.98

PKF Littlejohn LLP (external audit) - £252.00

d) To approve bank account changes and agree signatories - The Council gave approval for the Clerk to proceed with opening a banking facility at Unity Trust on behalf of the Parish Council, with the following accounts approved: Current Account, 32-day Notice (General reserves), 32-day Notice (Pelota Wall reserves), and an Instant Access Savings Account. In addition, the Council approved the transfer of £25,000 from the current Barclays account to the new Unity Trust 32-day Notice (General reserves) account to maximize interest earnings. It was resolved that the following Councillors be appointed as authorized signatories: Cllr Emma Way, Cllr Paul Lanham, Cllr Fred Voss, Cllr Andy Barber, Cllr Mary Herbert, Cllr Ian Yorston and Cllr Rob Haggerty. Any two of these Councillor signatories are required to authorize transactions. It was further resolved that the Clerk, Helen Graham, be appointed as the Full Account Administrator with "view and submit" access. The Clerk is granted authority to manage the account administration, including adding and removing signatories, setting up payments, and managing beneficiaries—but shall have no authority to authorize payments, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

1275. To receive Parish Councillors reports:

Cllr Herbert - nothing to report

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Cllr Yorston - proposed that Councillors revisit the discussion around all using Parish Council email addresses, and requested an email account for himself. The Chair agreed that this should be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr Voss - nothing to report

Cllr Barber - noted that in response to Mr Blocke's concern raised earlier in the meeting, he had been in touch with the owners of two properties near the Green Street defibrillator as possible alternative solutions, but had paused these discussions pending the feedback from SSE that they were hoping to find a solution. As Mr Blocke had left the meeting, it was noted that the Clerk will write to him to provide feedback in this regard.

Cllr Way - nothing to report.

1276. To note correspondence received – The Clerk noted correspondence from Citizens Advice encouraging those in need to ask for assistance with heating oil.

1277. Items for next Agenda – The following agenda items were noted for the next meeting:

- Discussion on the 1-way road system proposed
- Co-Option Policy
- Village Lighting
- Process for approving urgent payments outside of meetings
- Meeting dates for future meetings

1278. Next meeting date: The next meeting will be held on Monday 19th October 2026 at 7.15 pm in St George's Hall, Hinton St George.

The meeting ended at 9.05pm.

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