Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, Held on 10th February 2026 at the Village Hall, Kingston St Mary, starting at 19:00

1. Attendance and Apologies

In attendance:
Cllr P Townsend (Chairman)
Cllr P Boyce
Cllr D Darch
Cllr S Hancock
Cllr A Simpson
Cllr D Stripp
Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk)
Cllr N O'Donnell (Somerset)
Cllr D Perry (Somerset)
Apologies:
None

There were no members of the public in attendance.

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 13th January 2026

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.

4. Planning

Applications:
Case Ref: 20/26/0002 and 20/26/0003/LB - Alterations to gas pipe runs to ensure compliance with IGEM 5 regulations at Hollydene, Kingston Road, Kingston St Mary.
The Council resolved to fully support this application.
Please note that the Parish Council's full response to the above planning application can be found on Somerset Council's website or by following the link below:
https://www3.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/asp/webpages/plan/plapplookup.asp

5. Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes

1. Internet Banking – To be carried forward to a future meeting.
2. Noticeboard – The Clerk advised she has had no further communication from Legal Services and/or Highways although she has chased them up.
3. Speed Indicator Device – The Chair advised he has not heard back from the owners of Westhay Cottage.
4. Somerset Council Community Governance Review – The Chair spoke to Somerset Council Governance and learned the consultation on this will not happen until 2027, the Council agreed to put this item on hold.
5. Councillor Training – Cllr Stripp gave feedback on the training he attended, Engaging more effectively with young people. He said it was very good. Cllr Darch is attending training in March. The Chair encouraged the councillors to take up training where relevant.

6. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan Engagement Survey

The Chair advised this survey is online and is very much an individual thing. Cllr Darch agreed to complete the survey and the Chair said he would mention it in Link-Up.
Actions: Cllr Darch/Chair

7. Drone Project on the Quantocks

The Chair thanked the member of the community who attended this workshop on behalf of the Parish Council. The workshop was about using drones for incidents involving people and/or animals, as well as for monitoring and maintenance purposes.

8. Somerset Council's Consolidation and Consultation Strategy for Effective Dog Control 2026

The Chair advised Somerset Council is consolidating the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for dogs within Somerset. The proposal is to put all PSPOs together Somerset wide. There are 2 PSPOs, the first is to make it an offence not to pick up after your dog in public spaces. This will cover all of Somerset. The second is dog exclusion zones where dogs will be excluded or required to be kept on leads. This is one where we must put forward areas if we want to. The Church would like dogs to be kept on leads in the Church Yard. The Council agreed that dogs should be excluded from the Toddler Area. The Council then discussed the playing field area and resolved to request that it also be made a dog exclusion zone.
Actions: Chair

9. Citizens Advice Somerset

The Chair referred the Council to the letter and statistics from Citizens Advice in the meeting papers. Citizens Advice are appealing for funding for 2026. The Council agreed to donate £250 to Citizens Advice in 2026/27 and will raise a cheque in June.
Actions: Clerk (Action to be taken in June)

10. Crimestoppers South West Region

The Chair advised Crimestoppers is also appealing for funding and has requested a donation of £200. He said the Council has allocated £500 for grants in its 2026/27 budget. A donation of £200 would take grant expenditure to £450. The Council agreed to donate £200 to Crimestoppers and noted that sadly incidents of crime do occur in Kingston St Mary parish.
Actions: Clerk (Action to be taken in June)

11. PPLO Annual Review

The Clerk referred the Council to the correspondence received which states the existing PPLO (Parish Path Liaison Officer) would like to step down. In the e-mail, the Council Officer said that there is no requirement under the PPLO Volunteer Scheme for these volunteers to clear footpaths. She advised that any issues with overgrowth within the parish should be reported via Explore Somerset. The Council discussed whether it wants to appeal to the local community for someone to step forward and take on the role of PPLO. The Clerk agreed to e-mail the Officer and clarify what the role of the PPLO entails. The Council agreed it can then make an informed decision as to whether it wants to pursue a volunteer for this scheme. The Chair agreed to include a piece in Link-up.
Actions: Clerk/Chair

12. Somerset Communities Raging Against Poor Planning (SCRAPP)

The Chair advised the Council of the formation of SCRAPP because of poor planning decisions, over development and Neighbourhood Plans being ignored. He went on to say Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council has asked if we would like to get involved. The Council discussed issues around planning and whether central government has been challenged on the housing targets allocated to Somerset. The Council agreed to ask SCRAPP to keep them informed of the group's progress.

13. Road Hazards

The Chair advised we have been made aware of a few potholes around the parish by concerned residents. The Council agreed it can't do anything about these potholes other than report them and agreed it is frustrating to be told a pothole will not be repaired. Repair of potholes is based on national standards. The Clerk alerted the Council to a Facebook post on Taunton Matters by Cllr Rigby which explains the criteria about repairs on the road. The Council went on to discuss gritting and that the Kingston Road is not gritted due to its classification although it is travelled quite heavily and there is a school in the village. Somerset Cllr Perry agreed to take this matter up with the relevant Highways Officer.

14. Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk advised the Council needs to set a date for the Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June. Last year it was held on the 22nd May. The Council discussed possible dates and agreed to have the meeting on Thursday, 21st May. It also agreed to consider combining it with the Local Plan and/or the Community Land Trust. The Clerk agreed to book the Village Hall and will invite the same organisations as last year.
Actions: Clerk

15. Financial Audit & Review

The Chair said the accounts are in good shape. Income is £30k above budget due to CIL, grants and insurance claims. Operating expenditure is £ 5k below budget as we haven't spent on the natural environment and the fete costs were under budget. Capital and reserves expenditure forecast for the year is £24k over budget. The Council discussed the flooding on the road at Mill Cross and whether this might be a project worth spending some of its reserves on. The Clerk reminded the Council that £20k of the reserves were earmarked for the playing field improvements and this as well as the playing field shelter needed to be a priority. The Council discussed other possible improvements to the village and whether it should ask the villagers at the Annual Parish Meeting what they think we should be doing with the village.

16. Climate Emergency

Cllr Darch said she postponed her piece in Link-Up about bonfires due to the amount of rain we have had. She said everywhere is experiencing the effects of climate change. She has looked at the Somerset Rivers Authority 2024/25 report to see what money has been spent around us for natural flood management. Money has been spent at Park Farm on the Yarford tributary of the back stream to reinstate an old pond to help slow the peak flow towards Pickney Lane. This was highlighted by KSM PC after flooding in December 2023. The next River Tone Flood meeting is on the 25th February at 6pm. She also mentioned an article she wrote in the County Gazette. There has been a government report published into a nature security assessment on global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security which is quite depressing and frightening. She encouraged everyone to read it.

17. Playing Field Committee

The Chair advised there is maintenance to do on the pavilion and he would like to transfer money from the PC budget to the playing field account to undertake the work. Cllr Darch mentioned some verbal complaints about the storage unit erected on the playing field. She said it was felt by some members of the community that communication had not been very good. Cllr Stripp said a written complaint had been acknowledged and dealt with.

18. Local Community Network

The Chair advised the LCN AGM is going to be in the KSM Village Hall on the 24th June. The LCN is interested in bus services and there is a video call with the slinky manager on the 20th February. The Council thanked Ian Forrest for attending the Highways Working Group meetings. Cllr Stripp said the Boombox will be on the playing field in April. The Council discussed what may be the best use of the money set aside in the budget for young people.

19. Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust

Cllr Stripp said there was a meeting of the CLT last week and the focus is to try and get the stretch between the playing field and Parsonage Lane sorted for the active travel route.

20. Kingston Community Partnership

Cllr Stripp said things are progressing nicely with the fete.

21. Financial Matters

The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation and authorised the following payments:
£202.80 – Somerset Council, emptying of dog waste bins for Qtr 3, 01OCT2025-31DEC2025
£150.00 – Kingston St Mary Playing Field, Pavilion Hire April – October 2025
£24.90 – Anne Simpson, supplies for Parish Council floral arrangement

The Council approved the quote from Somerset Council in the amount of £676.00 + VAT for emptying the dog waste bins for 2026/27.

22. Items for Next Agenda
Please give any items to the Clerk.

23. Items for Link Up and KSM Website
The Chair will produce a report for Link Up.

24. Meeting Closed
20.42h

25. Date of Next Meeting
10th March 2026