Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, held on 14th July 2026 at the Playing Field Pavilion, Kingston St Mary, starting at 19:00

1. Attendance and Apologies

In attendance:
Cllr P Townsend (Chairman)
Cllr D Darch
Cllr S Hancock
Cllr D Stripp
Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk)
Cllr D Perry (Somerset)
Apologies:
Cllr P Boyce
Cllr A Simpson
Cllr N O'Donnell (Somerset)

There were no members of the public in attendance.

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 9th June 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: 20/26/0024/LEW - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the existing confirmation of commencement of application 20/22/0020 for the construction of an entrance and driveway, demolition of greenhouse and installation of water mains services at Newtons, Nailsbourne Road, Kingston St Mary
The Council has no evidence that would refute the authenticity of the applicant's evidence that construction of the new dwelling commenced prior to the 6th July 2026 and therefore raised no objection to this planning application.
Case Ref: 20/26/0023 - Erection of 1 No. dwelling with landscaping and associated infrastructure at Plot 23, Mill Meadow, Parsonage Lane, Kingston St Mary (resubmission of 20/24/0012)
The Council resolved to fully support this application.
Case Ref: 20/26/0022/NMA - Application for a Non-Material Amendment to application 20/05/0005 for alterations to windows, doors and location of the plant room at Plot 18, Mill Meadow, Kingston St Mary
The Council concluded that they would not have objected to the above alterations had they been included in the original planning application 20/05/0005 and therefore raised no objection to these proposed non material amendments.
Case Ref: 20/26/0021/AGN - Application for prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage building on land at Lower Portman Farm, Fitzroy Road, Taunton
The Council noted a decision of no objection was made on 10/07/2026. It was also noted the application falls within permitted development so the Council would have had no reason to object.
Please note that the Parish Council's full response to the above planning applications can be found on Somerset Council's website or by following the link below:
https://www3.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/asp/webpages/plan/plapplookup.asp
Other matters:
Somerset Local Plan 2045 – Scoping Consultation
The Council reviewed its draft response to the Somerset Local Plan consultation and agreed the response should focus on comments relating to: Spatial Strategy; Local Housing Needs Assessment; Roles &

Functions of Settlements and Vision and Outcomes. It was agreed the separate Call for Sites analysis would not be submitted as part of this consultation because it falls outside the consultation scope. The Chair agreed to amend and submit the comments relating to the Local Plan documents only. The Council also agreed to retain the Call for Sites assessment for future discussion if required.
Staplegrove East Development –
The Council have been requested by Stonewater to provide comments from them regarding previous engagement. Cllr Stripp agreed to prepare a first draft for circulation before submission. The Council then discussed the upcoming 12 week road closure and diversions associated with the Staplegrove West development and the effect this may have on local travel routes.

5. Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes

a. Internet Banking – To be carried forward to a future meeting.
b. The Spinney – The Council discussed the report of a fallen tree and other dangerous trees which have been identified, and the Chair advised, The Woodland Trust has been notified. The Councillors agreed the Parish Council should not assume responsibility for management of The Spinney due to maintenance and liability concerns but agreed to continue to keep the dialogue open with the Woodland Trust.
c. Noticeboard – The Clerk advised she and the Chair had met the contractor and agreed the installation location. The contractor is ready to proceed and feels it is a straightforward job. Hopefully, the noticeboard will be installed before the next meeting.
d. Village Green Maintenance – The Clerk said she had received a quote from the contractor today. The quote was for £56.00 per visit and covers all three benches. The contractor is proposing 4 visits between 1 August 2026 and 31 March 2027 making the total cost £224.00. The contractor will provide another quote for the job for the 2027/28 financial year in March 2027. The job includes, weeding and vegetation clearance, washing and cleaning the benches and removing debris from the area. The Council agreed to accept the quote and the Clerk said she would advise the contractor.
e. Chair of Council's Service to the Community Awards – The Chair updated the Council and said a nomination had been submitted for the Speedwatch Team with IF as the lead contact.
f. Somerset Bus Franchising Proposal – The Council discussed the campaign promoting demand-responsive "Slinky" buses and agreed how important it was to retain the existing scheduled bus services as a "Slinky" bus is not a suitable replacement. The Chair agreed to respond explaining the importance of maintaining the current services.

6. Meeting with Gideon Amos on Rural Fibre Broadband Rollout – 16 July

The Chair advised a meeting was scheduled regarding the rollout of fibre broadband with Gideon Amos at Cheddon Fitzpaine Village Hall from 18:00-19:30. The Council discussed the areas with poor reception in the parish and discussed the community plan and the work that was carried out when the plan was produced. The rollout of fibre and Airband's performance was also talked about. The Clerk said she would ask the Webmaster if he could attend. If no one was available to attend, she would ask for the notes from the meeting.

7. Review and Adopt the Following Policies

The Council approved and adopted the following policies:
a. Financial Risk Assessment;
b. Model Publication Scheme and
c. Financial Reserves Policy.

8. Review of Parish Council Accounts – January - March 2026

The Chair commented on the excellent job done by the Clerk in keeping the accounts. He went on to say, the PC had finished the year with reserves of £82k, £58k above budget. This was due to income being above budget by £29K, operational expenditure £9k below budget and capital expenditure, £16k below budget. Some of the reserves have been spent since the end of March on the play tower. The Chair said the £10k which was earmarked for an engineering survey on the active travel route still needs to be

spent. The Council discussed progress with the active travel route and Cllrs Stripp and Darch agreed to meet with the relevant landowner having received positive news from Stonewater in terms of access to the Staplegrove East development from the north.
The Chair agreed to speak to Absolute Play to quote on additional improvements to the playing field. The Councillors also discussed the lack of tree shade in the playing field which is an issue and no shade in the toddler's play area. They also discussed improvements to access and parking and felt this was a project which reserves could be spent on.

9. Asset of Community Value Regime Change

The Chair advised there was going to be a change to the ACV regime and that there would now be the right to buy. The new regime will allow 2 months to negotiate and 12 months to get the funding together to make a binding offer. An ACV currently lasts 5 years but is being increased to 10 years. The Council felt this was a positive change.

10. Changes to the Publication of Councillors' Home Addresses

The Clerk referred to the Parish Information Sheet in the meeting papers. She said all Councillors must now opt in if they want to have their home address published. The following actions are required by the Council:

a. All Councillors must update their ROI form to remove their home addresses. To maintain transparency under the address section 5.1, it can be stated, 'Home address not published in accordance with Section 32A of the Localism Act 2011."
b. The Clerk must e-mail Somerset Council with the updated position, i.e. a list of councillors which consent to their home address being published or an updated ROI form.

It was agreed that all Councillors who do not want their home addresses published need to complete a new ROI form stating under section 5.1 "Home address not published in accordance with Section 32A of the Localism Act 2011." The Clerk agreed to provide the Councillors with the ROI form and then forward the completed forms to the Monitoring Officer.

11. Parish Clerk Job Evaluation & Salary Review

The Chair advised the internal audit review highlighted the Clerks hourly rate needs to be linked to a spinal column point appropriate to the duties being carried out. The Chair told the Council he doesn't think this is being done and would therefore recommend the Clerk's job be re-evaluated. He said, this will most likely mean drafting a new job description. The Council agreed to re-evaluating the Clerk's job with the Chair leading the review.

12. Climate Emergency

Cllr Darch said the big thing is the heatwave and how people can cope with it. It is a reminder, like the film, The People's Emergency Briefing, said, we are in the least extreme weather we are ever going to get which is very scary. As a community we need to think about how we cool our houses as well as how we heat them. Cllr Darch said she attended the annual local nature partnership forum and said there is lots of good stuff going on around nature recovery. She was also invited by FWAG to go to the Crowcombe Estate, 2000 acres on the Quantock Hills owned by the Trollope-Bellew family for a farm walk. The team managing the land told the guests about their approach to land use and conservation. Crowcombe Estate won the 2025 Otter Award from FWAG. Cllr Darch said it was really impressive what they are doing.

13. Playing Field Committee

The Chair advised the Council of the incident which recently happened on the playing field where a young boy was injured. The Chair sent an e-mail to Absolute Play, the contractor, and they said the spade did not belong to them and wasn't the type of tool they would use in their line of work. The Council agreed the Chair had responded to the mother of the boy promptly and appropriately. She has not been back in touch.
The Chair said we had received a quote from Chris Groves Associates after an inspection of the trees in the playing field and are awaiting a quote from Arboricare. Chris Groves Associates has quoted c£3.4k for the playing field work and c£2.4k for work on the Oak on Tarr Lane.

The Council went on to discuss the fencing along the tree line going towards Parsonage Lane which is in very poor condition. It was also felt a shelter would be a good addition as there is very little shade in the playing field. The Chair advised the playing tower is nearly completed. The contractor is waiting on a telescope which they will fit once they have received it.
The Chair congratulated Cllr Stripp on the fete which was a great success. The net cost for the fete after the grant secured by the Playing Field Management Committee and other monies collected was £150. The Councillors agreed it was money well spent. Cllr Stripp felt it would be a good idea to commit to the second Saturday in June moving forward as the date for the village fete to help with the planning.
The Chair said the Accounts for the playing field have been completed up to the end of March 2026 and the committee has spent £400 more than it has received. The Council approved the Accounts and the Chair said he will submit them to the Charities Commission.

14. Local Community Network

The Chair said he has put a paper together about the gritting and IF will present it at the next Highways Working Group meeting which is scheduled for 23rd July. The LCN AGM is scheduled for next week, Tuesday, 21st July at the Village Hall. Cllrs Darch and Stripp said they will be attending and will help if needed.

15. Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust

Cllr Stripp said there was nothing to report about the Community Land Trust. He spoke to the Council about the community wealth fund/trust which the CLT are hoping to set up as a charitable incorporated organisation so it can help fund community projects and act as a fund-raising vehicle. There is a question over the name of the organisation and Cllr Stripp has been advised that neither the word fund or trust should be used in the title of the organisation. Cllr Stripp has already submitted the application under the Community Wealth Trust and will report back to the Council in September on progress.

16. Kingston Community Partnership

Cllr Stripp said there was nothing to report.

17. Financial Matters

The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation and authorised the following payments. The Council agreed to sign the bank reconciliation at the September meeting.

Payments

£489.02 – SALC, 2026/27 affiliation fees
£202.80 – Somerset Council, emptying of 2 x dog waste bins for Qtr 1, 1 April to 30 June 2026
£140.15 – Jill Larcombe, to carry out internal audit for the financial year 2025-2026
£30.00 – KSM Village Hall, hire of hall for Annual Parish Meeting 21 May 2026
£11,400.10 – Absolute Play Ltd, completion of play tower and installation

18. Items for Next Agenda

Please give any items to the Clerk.

19. Items for Link Up and KSM Website

The Chair will produce a report for Link Up.

20. Meeting Closed

20:59h

21. Date of Next Meeting

8th September 2026