Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, held on 9th June 2026 at the Playing Field Pavilion, Kingston St Mary, starting at 19:00

1. Attendance and Apologies

In attendance:
Cllr P Townsend (Chairman)
Cllr P Boyce
Cllr D Darch
Cllr D Stripp
Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk)
Cllr D Perry (Somerset)
Ms A Shilton (LCN Link Officer)
Apologies:
Cllr S Hancock
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 12th May 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: 20/26/0017/T - Notification to fell two cypress trees within Kingston St. Mary Conservation Area to the rear of Littlebrook, Kingston Road, Kingston St. Mary
The Council resolved to fully support this application.
Case Ref: 20/26/0018 - Removal of Condition No. 03 (agricultural occupancy) of application 44916/1 dated 12 May 1964 at Middlemarsh, Kingston St Mary
The Council resolved to fully support this application.
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 – Vision for Somerset
The Chair referred the Council to the meeting papers and the Vision for Somerset which he included for information purposes. He pointed out that according to the vision, by 2045 more residents in Somerset will have better access to everyday services by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. The Council briefly discussed the vision and were reminded of the online update scheduled for 10th June at 16.00 for anyone wanting to attend.
Staplegrove East Development –
The Chair advised he and several others had a video call on the 3rd June with the development project team about the cycle routes through the development. The team seem very open to altering their routes within the development to fit in with our plans for active travel routes. They are currently considering the access point on the Kingston Road to the development. The Councillors felt this was a very positive meeting and are hoping to continue discussions.

5. Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes

a. Internet Banking – To be carried forward to a future meeting.

b. Annual Parish Meeting – The Council reviewed the meeting and felt it went very well. The visitors who came remarked on all the incredible things going on in Kingston St Mary. The Council expressed their gratitude and appreciation to all those activities in the village which are volunteer led.

c. The Spinney – The Chair got a response to his e-mail about maintaining The Spinney. The Woodland Trust currently use Tilhill, a contractor, for maintenance and the aim is to retain it as it is. Natural flood management was looked at, and it was decided the section of the stream in the Spinney wasn't appropriate for this. The contract with Tilhill does not include the management of volunteers due to the administration involved and health and safety issues. The Woodland Trust indicated the PC may be able to take on a lease to manage this area of woodland if this was of interest. The Parish Council discussed this and the responsibilities around this type of arrangement and felt it didn't have the expertise to do this. The Council agreed to find out what a typical lease would look like.

d. Noticeboard – The Clerk said she is still trying to contact the contractor and is hoping to meet them at the site. She said she reviewed the original quote which includes installation. If he is unable to erect it, she will ask for a quote from another contractor.

e. The British Hedgehog Preservation Society – Cllr Stripp has contacted the school but has not had a response. The Council agreed to pick this agenda item up in the Autumn when the new head is in situ and invite him to a future PC meeting.

f. Village Green Maintenance – The Clerk will follow up on this. She is waiting for a quote from J K Grounds Maintenance and hopes to have more information by the next meeting.

g. Connectivity Plan Consultation – Cllr Darch referred the Council to her answers to the consultation which are in the meeting papers and briefly summarised her response on behalf of the Parish Council.

h. Permissive Path from Lodes Lane to Church – The Chair advised the permissive path is now open and an article has been submitted to Link-Up about the situation around the temporary closure. The Council thanked the landowner for re-opening the permissive path.

6. To review and note the AGAR Internal Audit Report 2025/26

The Council reviewed and noted the AGAR Internal Audit Report 2025/26.
The Chair referred the Council to the KSM PC Internal Audit Report 2025/26 which was good. He said he and the Clerk would address any items which needed addressing. One of these, was the Clerk's remuneration. The report says, "The Clerk does not seem to have received an in year salary increase."

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 – AGAR

a. To review and approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
The Council reviewed and approved Section 1 of the AGAR, Annual Governance Statement 2025/26.

b. To review and approve Section 2 – Accounting Statement 2025/26
The Council reviewed and approved Section 2 of the AGAR, Accounting Statement 2025/26.

8. Chair of Council's Service to the Community Awards 2026

The Council agreed to nominate Speedwatch for the Service to the Community Awards 2026.

9. Somerset Bus Franchising Proposal, May 2026 – Invitation for Views and Support

The Chair reviewed the proposal but couldn't find any mention of Route 23 or 23B or Hatch Green Coaches in the proposal. The Council discussed the proposal and felt they needed clarification on the bus franchise proposal. Anne Shilton agreed to see if she could find out who the Council should contact about this.

10. Electoral Services Update

The Chair said Somerset Council are now looking to recover the full costs of elections including Parish Elections. The Council considered the Elections Update - May 2026 in the meeting papers and agreed it is quite costly, but they could not object to it. The Council resolved to continue to allocate £4k in reserves for possible election costs.

11. Climate Emergency

Cllr Darch questioned whether we should have shown the People's Emergency Briefing at the Annual Parish Meeting but felt, although there was not a big crowd, those who attended were community engaged and were good people to reach as they have influence through other groups. Cllr Darch said Climate Emergency Taunton were thinking of holding a Climate Café in Taunton for people who have seen the film and want to discuss the situation around climate change. (This discussion took place under agenda item 5b.)

Cllr Darch said she attended a SRA meeting this week and there was an interesting conversation about the impact of new developments on flooding on The Levels. Somerset Council is funding £100k + to do a study into the impact. Planners at the meeting said every development has to be neutral in its run-off so, in theory, there should be no increase flood risk but no one takes into account the holistic effect of multiple developments. The result of the study should be interesting.

She said she had toured local farms with a FWAG representative and there is a lot of work being done locally about flood mitigation which we probably aren't aware of. She believes this has helped reduce flooding in Kingston St Mary.

12. Playing Field Committee

The Chair said he was successful at obtaining £2.5k in S106 funding towards the cost of the new play tower. The Council agreed retrospectively to approve the signing of the Funding Agreement. There is still Outdoor Recreation funds available of £1.6k which we may wish to consider spending on enhancing the outdoor space for the older generation.

The Chair updated the Council on progress with the play tower. The matting still must be laid and there are a few pieces of equipment missing which are quite important so unfortunately, it won't be ready for the fete.

The Chair confirmed grant funding of £1,250 from Somerset Community Foundation towards the cost of the fete had been awarded. Cllr Stripp went over the plan for setting up the fete with the Council and the timetable for the day.

13. Local Community Network

The Chair advised at the last LCN Highways Working Group meeting, white lining around the village has been improved but the gritting has not. The gritting decision was based on established criteria which the route doesn't meet, i.e. the local primary school is below the threshold for inclusion, Bus 23 does not meet the definition of a primary bus route and there are alternative treated routes available. Anne Shilton said there was a further discussion at the meeting about the criteria, who sets it and who makes the policy. She is hopeful answers to these questions will be forthcoming at the next LCN Highways Working Group meeting. The Council agreed it was an over reliance on technical criteria ignoring the fact it is a busy through road and other local factors.

AS asked the Council what are the priorities for Kingston St Mary in the coming year and what can the LCN do to help when things are wrong? The Chair suggested the LCN should find out more about how the Local Plan affects the LCN's area. AS said she will find out more about this if she can. She spoke about Somerset Council's comprehensive review of the LCNs in order to improve how the council supports and involves local communities. This consultation focuses on making it easier for residents, parishes, and businesses to be heard. Recommendations and outcomes from the review are expected to be published in Autumn 2026. She went onto say the LCN AGM will be held on the 24th June at Kingston St Mary Village Hall starting at 18.30.

14. Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust

Cllr Stripp said the active travel route continues to be the main focus at the moment. He also spoke about the Community Wealth Fund which was announced at the Annual Parish Meeting and the CLT is

taking advice on how to set up this charitable incorporated organisation. An article will be published in Link-Up about the Community Wealth Fund.

15. Kingston Community Partnership

Cllr Stripp said there was nothing to report.

16. Financial Matters

The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation, authorised the following payments, and discussed and then approved the quotation:

Payments

£180.00 + VAT – JK Grounds Maintenance, chipping of waste material behind the shipping container
£60.00 – CPRE, Annual Membership Fee
£250.00 – Citizens Advice Somerset, donation
£200.00 – Crimestoppers, Community Safety Grant
£68.80 – HMRC, Clerk's PAYE & NI for month 2 06MAY26-05JUN26
£95.41 – David Stripp, refreshments for the Annual Parish Meeting
£120.00 – West Monkton Parish Council, contribution towards LCN youth provision administration

Quotations

£515.00 + VAT – A R Computing, PC Laptop for Clerk's use

17. Items for Next Agenda

Please give any items to the Clerk.

18. Items for Link Up and KSM Website

The Chair will produce a report for Link Up.

19. Meeting Closed

20:45h

20. Date of Next Meeting

14th July 2026