

Minutes of Queen Camel Parish Council meeting on Monday 15 September 2025 at 7:30pm, Marples Room, Queen Camel Memorial Hall

Present - Councillors John Brendon, Bryan Norman, Harriet Chappell, Daniel Hewlett and Phillip Hall.

5 members of the public were in attendance and Somerset Unitary Councillor Henry Hobhouse.

09/01/25 Public Session

- Bridge at the north end of the village by the old school has been knocked and the stones are on the pavement. Somerset Highways need to be informed.
- Planning application 25/02147/FUL Land at Wales Farm – applicant advised they have put in an application to redevelop the site for their son Jack, who is an adult who has a disability. This proposed building would enable her son to live independently. The proposal is to reinstate where possible and where replacement occurs to replace porous materials with stronger building materials. The aim is to keep as much historical stone and be as natural as possible. Question raised in relation to the drainage and the applicant advised this would need to be checked with Wessex Water. The farmhouse is getting a new septic tank as part of this work.
- Countess Gytha School and the request at the last meeting for funding towards a poly tunnel – member of staff from the school came to explain that the request has been made to enable the children to access more outside learning. Parish council asked how the maintenance would be managed over the holidays. It was confirmed that there are volunteers who will visit the site and this is part of the school working more with the community. A concern raised at the last meeting was also the maintenance of the pond, but it was explained that this was not for the children at the time but has now been redeveloped as a wild area. The grant request was for £1500.

09/02/25 Apologies and updates on any vacancies
Councillor Phil Jones and Roy Lawrenson. These were accepted.

09/03/25 Declaration of interests in the agenda

- Councillor Dan Hewett declared an interest in agenda item 09/in relation to planning application 25/02147/FUL as he rents the field owned by the applicant.
- Councillor Dan Hewett declared an interest in the Countess Gytha grant request.

09/04/25 **Confidential Minute notification**
There is a confidential item to be discussed at the end of the meeting and therefore the public will need to leave the meeting at that point.
Proposed: Mr J Brendon
Seconded: Mr B Norman
All councillors present in agreement

09/05/25 **Minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 21.07.2025**
These were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the chair.

09/06/25 Actions from last meetings

- Councillor vacancy – the vacancy resulting from John Carnegie has now been notified to the public and they have not requested an election. Therefore the parish council can now co-opt someone onto the parish council.

09/07/25 **Somerset Unitary Councillor Report** – Henry Hobhouse

- Somerset Council transformation programme – this decision has been made by Somerset Council to invest £20 million over five years with a chosen partner to put this in place to save money.
- Somerset Council needs to save £106 million by April 2026.
- Parish boundaries – the government accepted the proposal to join Castle Cary and Ansford parishes together.

09/08/25

To **RECEIVE** the Clerk's Report of actions taken and updates for information

- Clerk's Report has been circulated to councilors and placed on the website. Most items are covered on the agenda.

09/09/25

To **CONSIDER** the following planning applications received and **RESOLVE** to submit comments where appropriate.

- **25/02075/TCA Rectory Barn, High Street, Queen Camel, Yeovil BA22 7NE** – Notification of intent to Fell No.1 Tree and carry out Tree Surgery works to no.1 Tree within Conservation Area: T1 Conifer – removal of tree due to damaging drains, T2 Conifer – crown raise to 6 ft and reduce height by 2 metres due to outgrowing space. **Notification only.**
- **25/02166/TCA 1 Cleaveside Close, Queen Camel, Yeovil BA22 7NL** – Notification of intent to fell No.1 Conifer tree and reduce the canopy of No.1 Hornbeam tree by 2m within a Conservation Area. **Notification only.**
- **25/02213/TCA Mildmay Orchard, High Street, Queen Camel, Yeovil BA22 7NH** – Notification of intent to carry out Tree Surgery Works to No. 5 Trees within a Conservation Area. T1 Bramley Apple: reduce radical spread to 1.5 metres to mitigate interference with carpark. T2 Ash: Re-pollard at 50cm above historical pruning point to mitigate risk and overdominance in respect of surrounding target and structures. T3 Ash: Reduce west quadrant by 2.5 – 3 metres to prevent branch failure over garden user area and dwelling. T4 Ash: Reduce west quadrant by 2.5 – 3 metres to prevent branch failure over garden user area and dwelling. T5 Eucalyptus: Remove 1/3 of etiolated apical section leaning heavily toward Mildmay dwelling. **Notification only.**
- **25/02147/FUL Land at Wales Farm, Church Path, Wales, Queen Camel, Yeovil** – Demolition of existing modern agricultural buildings; erection of agricultural building; conservation and reinstatement of historic barns to form 2 No. dwellings and associated hard and soft landscaping.
Councillors believed it was positive that concrete that is breaking up will be replaced and that a scruffy 20th century agricultural building will be removed. The plans are to use natural material.
Councillors in agreement to support this application.
Proposed: Mr J Brendon
Seconded: Mrs H Chappell
1 Councillor abstained but all others present in agreement
- **25/01887/TCA Penridge, Englands Lane, Queen Camel, Yeovil BA22 7NN** – Notification of intent to Fell No.1 Tree and carry out Tree Surgery Works to No.1 Tree within a Conservation Area. Conifer (T1) – fell to ground level and replace with a row of lauren trees (6-8 weeks). Holly (T2) Whole crown reduction in line with boundary wall and 1m below the power line to provide sufficient clearance to property and room for regrowth. **Notification only.**
- **Friends of Mudford Action Group** – meeting last week but no further information at this point.
- **25/01141/REM**
This application was discussed at the last full parish council meeting on 21 July 2025 and comments submitted by deadline of 22.07.2025. The parish council objected to some of the materials being used as they were not in keeping with the Neighbourhood

Plan requirement of reflecting the tradition of the village and there has not been enough assurance given around the drainage concerns for the village. Councillors remain concerned as their recommendation in the Section 106 that the affordable housing could not become wholly owned by residents and then sold on, which reduces the number of affordable houses was not put into the Section 106 agreement. Councillors agreed to hold an Extra Ordinary Meeting (EOM) to discuss this application as it was received too late to add to the agenda for this meeting. EOM to be held on Thursday 2 October.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange EOM for 02.10.2025

- 09/10/25** To **RECEIVE** approved planning applications
- None notified.

09/11/25 Highways and Traffic

- Update on Sutton Farm Working Group – there has not been a response from Mike Rigby who is the Somerset Council portfolio holder for planning. The group will now consider a formal a complaint to the Ombudsman and seeking legal advice. Mrs Chappell reported that lorries are back in the village and Somerset Council response is that their journey is for agricultural use.
- Wales Bridge – the strengthening work has been completed and the tarmac work is now being completed.
- Update on HGV traffic in the village and submission to the Police and Crime Commissioner (Reference 5PZKU) – a response has been received from the PCC. The response directs the parish council back to the Somerset Council Highways. It is unclear if there is a Traffic Restriction Order of 7.5 tonne on the bridge and it was agreed that Henry Hobhouse would contact Andy Pritchard to check this.
- Wales sign – unfortunately this has been taken several times. Councillors agreed that a cast iron one should be considered and Mr D Hewlett agreed to look at the cost of a cast iron finger post type.
- Speedwatch equipment – the equipment needs to be returned as there is no evidence of consistent speeding in the village. Equipment to be returned.

09/12/25 Flood Working Group update

- Concerns regarding keeping the River Cam cleared – the Environment Agency are reducing budget for rivers like the Cam. There are riparian owners who have a responsibility to keep clear their part of the river. The parish council cannot enforce this and can only encourage these owners to keep their part clear.
- Old School culvert – this is not being cleared by the Environmental Agency and the Flood Working Group need to research grants by Somerset Rivers Authority. Email chairs of Flood Working Group and Old School to ask them to work together to try and get the culvert cleared.

09/13/25 Playing Fields Working Group updates

- Reports of anti-social behaviour – following the last meeting a gate was put in place but has not been closed as the right of way needs to be in place for pedestrians. Mr D Hewlett advised he will take the rails down so that the right of way can be maintained. Mr Hewlett needs to submit an invoice for the cost of the gate.
- Annual Play Area inspection report by Somerset Council – there were two minor notes which Kathy was going to attend to.

ACTION: Clerk to confirm these have been completed

- Tractor replacement/repairs update – the new mower has been ordered but there are some adjustments that need to be made before the parish council can take delivery.
- Surplus/unused kerosene and how to dispose of this – currently this is still being used with

the tractor but will need to be considered once the new mower is in place and the tractor has been sold.

- e) Review of policies – these were discussed at the last parish council meeting.
- f) Review of finances – spending is within budget predictions.
- g) Playing Field initiative by Somerset Council – this will be Somerset Council initially collating information on facilities available across Somerset.
- h) SALC grants for improvements – there are grants available for projects.
- i) Chair of Playing Field Working Group – Kathy has confirmed that she is stepping down from this position and therefore someone else will need to take on this role.
- j) Rubber matting covering the grass – HAGS have been out to inspect them and advised that soil needs to be put on top of them. Working Group to put this in place.
- k) Cracks in Pavilion Wall – a builder is going to review the issue and report on proposed action.

09/14/25

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

- a) Update on Neighbourhood Plan (discussed prior to the new Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) – the plan needs to be reviewed before Christmas 2025 and finalised by May 2026. Jo Wilkins who is the Somerset Council adviser has suggested including another potential site for development. She believes that this could potentially be a major change and therefore a Referendum would be required.
- b) The next meeting date for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is 13 October at 1900.
- c) Mildmay Arms – the public house has been up for sale for two years and the community are considering purchasing it. A questionnaire has been sent out to the public and there is a public meeting planned for 29 September. The group are working with The Plunkett Foundation.

09/15/25

Update from the last Local Community Network (LCN) meeting

- a) No further updates.

09/16/25

Grant Applications

- a) Countess Gytha School – a grant request has been received in the sum of £1500 to put in place a poly tunnel. The parish council asked for more information after the last meeting and a representative from the school provided this at the beginning of this meeting in the public session. Councillors were in agreement to make this grant to the school from the Community Benefit Fund.

Proposed: Mr J Brendon

Seconded: Mr B Norman

All councilors present in agreement with one abstention due to interest declared

09/17/25

Finance and Banking

- Payments for approval since the last parish council meeting
 - Richard Ayles - £208.08
 - SPFA - £15.00
 - Simon Pritchard - £85.50
- Upcoming payments
 - Coomber Security Systems - £53.46
 - HMRC - £651.65
 - Western Webb - £102
 - Wheelie Bin payment to clerk - £144.48
 - Purchase of new mower - £8000
- Income received
 - None to report.
- Bank balances
 - Current account = £13 067.26

Reserves (savings) = £67 608.81

All invoices are in SCRIBE and balances from last year closed off but bank reconciliation still to be finalised.

- Bank signatories – Mr R Lawrenson is now an authorised signature and councilors are in agreement to add Mrs H Chappell to be a signatory.
- External Audit (AGAR) outcome – there are no areas for concern. Certificate of Completion to be published from 06.10.25 until the end of December.
- Queen Camel Youth Club approach regarding funding – there has been a youth club in Queen Camel for the village and neighbouring parishes children which was funded from a grant that the Balsam Centre in Wincanton. There are approximately 5 children from West Camel that attend and less from other areas. The grant with The Balsam Centre has now come to an end and they would like the parish council to consider continuing this facility. There needs to be one qualified youth worker and a person who supports for each session and the costs would be £6000 per annum and the parish council would need to employ them. Councillors decided that this cost was too high for a small number of children and that they should consider what alternatives are on offer that they may be able to support.

09/18/25

Correspondence Received

Somerset Council Information Emails – Economic Climate and Playing Pitch Strategy
Somerset Council Flood Wardens Lunch and Learn 21.08.2025
SALC AGM on 03.01.2026

07/19/25

Date of next meeting

Monday 17 November 2025 at 1930 in the Marples Room at the Memorial Hall.

Finance Personnel and Risk Committee – Monday 03 November at 1930

Playing Field Working Group – TBC

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – TBC

07/20/25

Confidential Minute

Meeting closed at 09.40pm