
GREAT SOMERFORD (INCORPORATING STARTLEY) PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 7 January 2026 Community Room@ 7.30 pm

Present	Cllr Barker Cllr Evans Cllr Griffiths (Chair) Cllr Harper	Cllr Phillips Cllr T Sturgis Cllr D Todd
In attendance	Cllr E Threlfall, H Wallace (Clerk), 6 members of the public	
PQT	<p>A member of the public informed that the Great Somerford Community Fund has raised over £4,000 at the church fete over the summer, over £2,000 of which has been donated to Dorothy House and a further £1,000 was raised at the Christmas Fayre. The Community Fund are really happy that they are able to give back and the Parish Council commended this and said that it would be in the notes for the Signpost and shared via a Parish Information Email. Action: Cllr Barker and Cllr Griffiths.</p> <p>Another member of the public had raised a concern about debris and metal in the river which had been in the water for some time and caused a number of parishioners to remark upon it. The landowner has replied to the parishioner personally about the concern raised. The Parish Council noted the concern and had also replied to the parishioner as follows:</p> <p><i>The Parish Council would like to help keep the parish safe, clean and tidy. We note the concern about debris in the river and have contacted Wiltshire Council and the landowner about it. Through our enquiries we understand that planning permission was not required and that the landowner has tried to have the debris removed and is working to resolve the situation as soon as possible, when safe to do so. We are also aware that the Environment Agency has been informed of the issue.</i></p> <p>At the meeting, the Chair re-iterated this message and reminded those present that the Parish Council has no powers of enforcement. The PC had also checked with Wiltshire Association of Local Councils to ensure that a correct response and approach had been taken. Overall, the Parish Council shares the concerns about the debris and understands that the situation will be resolved as soon as it's safe to do so.</p>	
WCRC	<p>WCllr Threlfall expressed her frustration that no consultation was allowed before a decision was taken by Cabinet to close 2 Household recycling centres, (at Purton and Lower Compton, Calne). When this occurs, residents will have to use the small site at Stanton St Quintin (or that on the far side of Marlborough). Furthermore, there are major roadworks due near Stanton. A booking system will be put in place in the hope of reducing the frequent queues. If residents have questions, they can attend a special meeting which has been called at 6.30pm on 20th January 2026 at Royal Wotton Bassett Memorial Hall. Alternatively, they can contact Cllr Threlfall with their concerns for her to put forward.</p> <p>Cabinet has also proposed that kerbside recycling and rubbish collections should be changed to a 3-weekly rotation in future. This will be considered at Council in February.</p>	

At the last Council meeting, a proposal to charge double council tax on second homes in Wiltshire was narrowly defeated. Unlike Cornwall, Wiltshire has very few of these and it is an expensive and difficult tax to collect, with numerous simple expedients available to avoid it (such as advertising the house on AirBnB).

A proposal to increase council tax on the tiny number of homes which are empty for more than 2 years was voted through.

She was delighted to hear that the works by the war memorial and pavement on Top Street had been completed and that the drainage on the Sutton Benger Road had coped with recent rain. She is pressing for the resurfacing needed on West Street.

Following a question, Cllr Threlfall shared a contact telephone number for people who are concerned about others who may be vulnerable in the community - 0300 456 0111 and also this link on the Wiltshire Council website: [Wiltshire Adult Social Care Advice and Contact Team | Your care Your support Wiltshire](#)

1. INTRO	Apologies for Absence Cllr Gravell, Cllr Harrison
	Declarations of Interest Cllr Harper declared an interest in a planning item and therefore abstention from that conversation.
2. Minutes	Minutes and Matters Arising The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 5 November were approved and signed by the Chair as a true record. Proposed: Cllr Evans, Seconded: Cllr Phillips
	Action Register: Cllr Sturgis thanked Cllr Threlfall for the information obtained in relation to Manor Park and the Chestnut Tree. When the Tree Preservation Order was made, there was no note of who it was served upon. It also appears from the documents that there are discrepancies over records of land ownership and access around No.6. The information didn't help resolve the land ownership and responsibility questions. It was noted that Parish Council Insurance has been renewed. There is a policy in place for 3 years but it will be put as a standing item to check it annually with the financial papers at the June meeting. Through discussions, Cllrs decided to remove the gate which is broken on the Glebe Field. Action: Cllr Sturgis
3. CIL	Cllr Phillips gave an update on the project to find and run a feasibility study for a MUGA. The initial has report gone back to the consultant to provide additional details. There are four potential options for a suitable location for a MUGA and the PC needs a recommendation on which is best and why. There is another location that the consultant will re-consider. Cllr Todd has contacted the Diocese' Kate Navarro and will follow up regarding the options for a long-term lease for the Glebe Field. Further updates to follow. Cllr Sturgis mentioned that there may be additional funding available.

4. Planning Applications received since the last meeting

PL/2025/08522

Marshlands, Great Somerford

Proposal: Replacement of a stable block with a single storey outbuilding for use as a gym, office and games room. The outbuilding will not be habitable accommodation and will provide additional amenity to the main house only.

Decision: No objection

PL/2025/08373 - withdrawn

PL/2025/09771

Ladys Walk House, Great Somerford

Proposal: Installation of small ground mounted solar array to serve Ladys Walk House

Decision: No objection

Applications determined since the last meeting

PL/2025/08168

Address: Lauderdale House, 23 Winkins Lane

Proposal: Single storey extension to rear of existing dwelling

Decision: Approve with conditions

PL/2025/08339

Address: Mulberry House, Frog Lane

Proposal: Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Decision: No objection

PL/2025/07702

Address: 1 Paddock Close, Great Somerford

Proposal: Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Decision: No objection

PL/2025/08082

Address: Thirlstone, 4 Glebelands, Great Somerford

Proposal: Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Decision: No objection

PL/2025/09097

Bay Tree House, Great Somerford

Proposal: Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Decision: No objection

PL/2025/07686

Land east of Brown Leaves, Hollow St, Great Somerford

Proposal: Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Decision: No objection

Housing Developments

The developer is going to plant up some areas in the land off Seagry road and it will be managed by the management company.

Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Sturgis has spoken with Aron Smith who did the Brinkworth Neighbourhood Plan and the next step is for GSPC to do a quick survey of the village and get a schedule for 2,3,4 or larger bedoomed houses. One of the arguments in the previous neighbourhood plan was to get back to a more balanced selection of housing. Cllr Sturgis asked for some volunteers to check the number of bedrooms of houses in the parish by visual inspection from outside only. **Action:** Cllrs

Evans, Phillips and Todd are going to assist.

Lime Down

Cllr Sturgis has prepared further comments to the planning application which relate predominantly to concerns around drainage of the proposed solar site. Cllr Griffiths abstained from commenting with a potential conflict of interest due to working for an energy company. The PC agreed to allow Cllr Sturgis delegated powers to submit a comment. **Proposed:** Cllr Harper, **Seconded:** Cllr Evans and carried.

Monthly Finance Report

5. Finance The finance report was agreed and signed **Proposed:** Cllr Harper, **Seconded:** Cllr Phillips. The reconciliation was completed by Cllr Barker.

The bank balances on 31 December were:

Current Account	1,446.84
Deposit Account	8,000
Fixed Term Savings	76,088.26
Combined total	85,535.10

Cllr Harper reported on the draft budget and Cllrs will respond with various updates before the final figures are approved.

Cllrs discussed and agreed to rise in the precept from £15,300 to £16,700 (roughly 4%), which is lower than a lot of other parishes. The PC agreed in principal to the precept proposed as a close estimate, which will be given one last check post the meeting and the final figure emailed round. **Proposed:** Cllr Harper, **Seconded:** Cllr Sturgis and agreed.

Cllr Harper shared that the old Free Gardens Charity is in the process of being wound down.

Winkins Lane Playground

6. Managed Facilities Cllr Phillips reported that the big swings bar has been repaired and maintenance completed on the climbing frame equipment. The only other aspect to look at could be to replace the wood chips under the swings with safety flooring.

Community room

Action: Cllr Todd to discuss with the school about improving lighting and to ask about whether or not the gates are locked (at the time of the PC meeting).

Action: Cllr Todd will provide bookings for reconciliation at year end. *(done)*

There haven't been any requests recently from the school regarding health and safety checks. Health and Safety is an item on the agenda for the February meeting.

7. Environment Cllr Evans has been regularly reporting potholes on the MyWilts APP and Parishioners are encouraged to do the same -or online at <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting>

Startley Cemetery

8. Standing Items Cllr Harrison proposed in absentia to increase fees to the same level as Little Somerford on the grounds that they are similar. **Proposed:** Cllr Griffiths, **Seconded:** Cllr Todd and all agreed. The fees include rates for residents and non-residents and different amounts for different plots. The new fees will be published to the website shortly. **Action:** Cllr Harrison

Thanks to former Cllr Mansfield for ongoing work on the website and PIEs. Recently a saving was made on the website licence which was great.

Cllrs discussed the Defibrillator and agreed to make a sign to clarify that 999 must be called in the first instance. **Action:** Cllr Todd

Action: Cllr Griffiths or Gravell to check and confirm that grit bins are ready for use. (*Post meeting it was confirmed that both grit bins are full*)

Cllr Todd reported that the knocked stones at the war memorial have been put back in place.

Thanks to parishioner Mr Batey for his help with this.

Cllr Evans has meetings set up with the school for ongoing liaison with them.

Clerk recruitment

9. Clerk Recruitment The job advert has been placed on the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils website. Applications will be sent to the Clerk and then on to the staffing committee for the 19 January closing date.

10. Notice The PC intend to make the Annual Parish Meeting more social and will consider the best way to do this.

Action: Cllr Sturgis to talk with the Chair of Goscroft Hall about the call for local Parish Cllrs to attend their meetings.

Future dates: 4 February, 4 March, 1 April, 6 May APM and APCM, 3 June, 1 July.

The PC noted that the Chair, Cllr Griffiths would be absent from March, April, May and possibly June meetings and that Cllr Sturgis would be acting as Chair during this period.

The meeting ended at 8.52

ApprovedChair Date