
GREAT SOMERFORD (INCORPORATING STARTLEY) PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 4 February 2026 Community Room@ 7.30 pm

Present	Cllr Barker Cllr Evans Cllr Griffiths (Chair)	Cllr Harrison Cllr T Sturgis
In attendance	Cllr E Threlfall, H Wallace (Clerk), 1 member of the public	
PQT	<p>Use of mobile phones in meetings was raised. There is in law provision to record meetings. GSPC requests that should recording take place, it is notified beforehand, as a courtesy to those present. It was noted that some councils ask for phones to be switched off to reduce distractions. A member of the public also raised concerns around the Beaufort Hunt and requested that they not be invited into the Parish. The Chair reiterated the politically neutral nature and limited powers of a Parish Council, and the need to raise any illegal matters with the police.</p> <p>a) The Frog Lane soakaway has been working until this week. Cllr Sturgis is in conversation with the Bowers (residents on Frog Lane) about a potential pump solution on their land.</p> <p>b) The PC followed up regarding the debris in the river and note that the Environmental Agency is aware of the debris and the plan to lift it out as soon as the weather permits.</p> <p>An item raised between meetings: Coming from the war memorial, up Hollow Street, there is a high verge on one side and vehicles attempting to keep away from it have pushed up the other side so there is less room for a ditch to be clear and allow better drainage. Action: Cllr Threlfall and Sturgis to look at measurements and potential for piping the ditch.</p> <p>With regards to the Winkins Lane traffic survey; there is still an ongoing discussion about getting "No HGV" signs. Once given permission, the PC could organise installation.</p>	
WCRE	<p>Cllr Threlfall reported that she was pleased that, after an outcry from residents, Wiltshire Council Cabinet has temporarily reversed its decision to close two HRCs (Household Recycling Centres) this year. (Purton will remain open for a further 3 years and Calne for at least a year.) However, in future users will have to book their visits to HRCs using an online system. Further good news was that the Cabinet's decision to defund the Community First LINK transport scheme has also been reversed - although future funding is unclear.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council's budget is under pressure and the proposals for cuts include reducing the Parish Steward system and also removing the funding of emergency supplies like road salt and gel sacks. LHFIFG (which commissions minor projects on roads/footpaths) will see cuts and schemes will be directed towards large substantive issues - which is likely to mean work is concentrated into towns rather than villages. All this will have an impact on rural parishes. At present Parish Stewards are focusing on dealing with potholes. Residents should please keep reporting these.</p>	

The drains and potholes on Hollow Street were discussed – the parish steward has told Cllr Evans that he will do some temporary patching there and on Heath Lane.

Recent bad weather has led to trees falling onto roads. It should be remembered that landowners are responsible for monitoring the health of their own trees and could be subject to insurance claims if they injure someone.

If the fallen tree on a road is a danger to life, please call 999. If it is only slightly obstructing the road, please call Wiltshire Council 0300 456 0105 or report it online at MyWilts Reporting.

1. INTRO Apologies for Absence
Cllr Gravell, Cllr Harper, Cllr Phillips, Cllr Todd

Declarations of Interest
None

2. Minutes Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 7 January were approved with a change made regarding the donation from the Great Somerford Community Fund and signed by the Chair as a true record. **Proposed:** Cllr Barker, **Seconded:** Cllr Evans.

3. CIL At the November PC meeting, Cllrs had approved the lowest quote for the repair of the church wall, using CIL monies, with the caveat that the material would be double-checked before work commenced. This will be done by Cllr Barker and Cllr Evans. **Action:** Cllr Sturgis to proceed in obtaining stone samples.

4. Planning Applications received since the last meeting

Planning applications are not coming through properly so it's hard to see the information. **Action:** Cllr Threlfall to ask Wiltshire Council to check the reporting of 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: Cllr Sturgis will have a look at the plans before recommending but doesn't foresee any objection.

PL/2026/00727

Tangles, Great Somerford

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

Decision: No objection

Housing Developments

Nothing this time

Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Sturgis is soon to meet Master Planning to discuss data for the housing need survey.

5. Finance Monthly Finance Report
The finance report was agreed and signed **Proposed:** Cllr Griffiths, **Seconded:** Cllr Evans. The reconciliation was completed by Cllr Barker.

The bank balances on 31 January were:

Current Account	78,544.36
Deposit Account	8,005.02
Fixed Term Savings	0.00
Combined total	86,549.38

Cllr Harper has sent all Cllrs the final budget which had been provisionally approved in January pending a couple of small amendments and in order to approve the precept, which has now been submitted to Wiltshire Council.

- a) Section 137 donations were discussed. **Action:** Cllr Griffiths to ask SHASA for their request. **Action:** Cllr Barker to check on a request for an extra £300 towards tree safety work at the Free Gardens.

6. Managed Facilities Winkins Lane Playground

No update this time.

Community room

It was agreed that more lighting is needed for any evening community room use. **Action:** Cllr Evans to raise it with school

7. Policies Health & Safety Policy approved: **Proposed:** Cllr Griffiths, **Seconded** Cllr Barker. **Action:** to be signed by Cllr Griffiths and sent for the website (Clerk)

8. Environment No further comments

9. Standing Items Startley Cemetery – the PC does not have information of anybody having reserved a plot so it is assumed there are no reservations. The fees have been brought into line with Little Somerford’s and will be published shortly on the website and in the noticeboard.
Cllr Evans reported that he has a schools liaison meeting coming up and will report back.

10. Clerk Recruitment There were two candidates for Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer and one withdrew. A decision was made not to progress with the other candidate because it was felt that coming up to year end and in the Chair’s absence it would be best to have a Clerk with direct current experience. Local clerks were approached to help cover the role temporarily to get the PC through year-end and the more complex upcoming meetings before looking to re-advertise. A local Clerk has offered to be a locum for the period. When the advert is re-published it will be clearer that whoever is appointed must attend meetings. It will be ideal to recruit just prior to August to allow some time for induction.

10. Notice Future dates: 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 8.30

Approved **Chair** **Date**