

MINUTES OF THE BROMPTON REGIS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT BROMPTON REGIS VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 9TH JANUARY 2025

The meeting opened at 735pm

510. PRESENT: Mr J Andrews, Mr D Cherry, Mr S Coates, Ms T Davies, Mr M Headley (Chairman), Ms L Luxton.

Also present: Member of the public, Mr O Matthews, Cllr S Pugsley from 745pm and Sarah Buchanan (Clerk).

511. APOLOGIES

Mr M. Arnold, Mr L Ringrose and Councillor F M Nicholson (Work / Personal commitments).

512. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS AND MEETING MANAGEMENT

The Chairman thanked Members for attending the meeting as an addition to the usual schedule and wished everyone a happy new year. He invited Mr Matthews to address the meeting at the agenda item(s) of interest to him.

513. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

514. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6th NOVEMBER 2024

These having been circulated prior to the meeting Ms Davies proposed and Mr Andrews seconded their acceptance and approval as a correct record and the minutes were signed as such.

515. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2024

These having been circulated prior to the meeting Mr Cherry proposed and Mr Headley seconded their acceptance and approval as a correct record and the minutes were signed as such.

516. PLANNING APPLICATION 6/3/24/009: Land at Higher Ford, Withiel Florey. Proposed construction of dwelling and garage and associated works.

In the interests of the member of the public present and given the weather warnings the Chairman brought this item forward from later in the agenda and outlined the proposal and invited Mr Matthews to respond to questions. Mr Andrews noted that

the proposed dwelling is intended to support one of the larger sheep sheds in the area for which there is a recognised need for worker's housing. Mr Headley questioned the scale of the proposed works in the context of ENPA policy HCD9 and its statement of floor area. Mr Pugsley clarified that a case may be made for a secondary farm dwelling to be larger than the policy suggests when the dwelling is part of a farm unit. With that clarification Mr Coates proposed and Ms Davies seconded the motion that the BRPC support the proposal on the grounds that it seeks to support the farm unit and its structure is in keeping with the landscape and setting. This was unanimously approved.

Mr Matthews left the meeting at 8pm.

ACTION CLERK submit comments.

517. SOMERSET COUNCILLORS' UPDATES

Cllr Pugsley advised that his updates related to items on the agenda and it was agreed that these be brought forward as follows.

518. BOUNDARY REVIEW

Cllr Pugsley referred to documents circulated prior to the meeting (from Minehead Town Council, Kingston St Mary Parish Council, Somerset Council and papers for the Somerset Council committee meeting to be held on 14 January 2025). He outlined the purpose and principles of the review and the emphasis within it to create electoral divisions of equal or near equal population size. He outlined the rationale for the Somerset Council proposal to form two divisions that would contain parishes currently supported in the Exmoor division, one being roughly western Exmoor to the Devon border and the other roughly Eastern Exmoor, the Brendon Hills and the coastline from Dunster to Watchet.

The meeting considered the proposed divisions and noted that as Brompton Regis is supported by services and communities to its west rather than to the north and that its upland geography is more akin to the wider area of Exmoor than to the parishes to the north and along the coastline. Concern was expressed that a division which separated Brompton Regis from the wider area of Exmoor and brought into a division with lowland and coastal areas could mean that its interests could be overshadowed by those of the coastal and lowland parishes. The meeting noted the value of Brompton Regis, Upton and Skilgate being in the same division, despite not all of that area being within the national park.

The meeting voiced concern that the Somerset Council proposed eastern division as Carhampton, which did not seem to reflect the nature of the area. Also the Somerset Council proposal described the proposed western division as encompassing Exmoor national park when in fact many parishes within the park were not included in it.

After much discussion it was suggested that while the need for population equity was understood the special nature of Exmoor and the unity of Exmoor and the Brendon

Hills should be considered by the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) as of equal importance to population numbers when defining electoral divisions.

The meeting agreed that because of the links across the Brendon Hills and Exmoor, regardless of the divisions which will be formed, the composition of the Exmoor Local Community Network should be maintained as is and that members representing divisions included in that LCN area play active roles in the LCN.

Mr Headley thanked Cllr Pugsley for his clear information and hard work on this matter and summarised the discussion. The meeting agreed that a full response setting out the concerns above be sent to Somerset Council and the LGBC.

ACTION: CLERK to submit a full response.

519. HIGHWAYS WINTER MAINTENANCE

Cllr Pugsley invited feedback on the current arrangements. Members advised that the green F2 route (Mill Cross to Roborough Gate) had not been salted before or during the recent severe weather and that it appeared that little grit was being spread on the red route (Beech Tree Cross to Mill Cross). The road from Roborough Gate to Cophole has been treacherous, the road through the village behind the church and the road at Renford Knapp have at times been ice sheets due to problems with drainage and freezing water on the roads. Some landowners and residents had DIY gritted using bins and bags, some of which were now in short supply.

The Clerk reported that a full response was awaited from Highways regarding the suggestion of a parish gritter.

Cllr Pugsley asked to be kept up to date with issues and that these also be raised at the next meeting of the Local Community Network (16 01 25).

520. PARISH PRECEPT 2025-26

Cllr Pugsley advised that Somerset Council intends to set a balanced budget for 2025-26 and that it is continuing to seek reductions in staffing and to delegate functions to local councils. The meeting discussed whether to raise the precept by the rate of inflation or maintain it as is. Discussion highlighted pressure on household finances and the need to ensure that the parish council could as required respond to community need. It was agreed that the current reserves are adequate for foreseeable expenditure and that year on year in recent years expenditure had fallen short of income or was in balance.

The Chairman proposed that the precept remain as is but with awareness that pressure on the community could mean that the parish council would need to raise the precept by a significant amount in 2026-27.

Mr Andrews proposed and Mr Headley seconded the motion that the precept remain as is for 2025-26 and this was agreed.

Cllr Pugsley left the meeting at 830pm.

ACTION CLERK submit form requesting the precept as is (£5750 p.a.)

521. BLEED KITS

Information about this initiative that had been circulated prior to the meeting was discussed. It was AGREED that the greatest need for such a resource was on working farms and that a resource in the village would be unlikely to be well used and that no action be taken.

522. FINANCE

522.1 Clerk's quarterly salary (£400) c/f from 4th December.

Ms Davies proposed and Ms Luxton seconded the motion that this be paid and this was agreed.

522.2 Clerk's sundries (£106.15) c/f from 4th December

Ms Luxton proposed and MS Davies seconded the motion that his be paid and this was agreed.

522.3 Sundries and gate for the lock up £109.39 and £97.80 (minute 495.2)

Mr Cherry proposed and Mr Coates seconded payment and this was agreed.

523. PLANNING

523.1 Application 6/3/25/001: proposed variation of condition 2 of application 6/3/04/106 to allow occupation as a holiday let or as a local need affordable dwelling. The Duckhouse, Leigh Farm, Exton TA22 9LD.

The meeting noted the location and size of the property. Ms Davies asked that there be an assurance that the accommodation would be available at affordable local rents. Mr Coates proposed and Ms Davies seconded the motion that the application be supported and requested assurance that the property would be affordable to local needs.

ACTION: CLERK to submit comments.

524. HIGHWAYS

The following were noted for the Clerk to report:

- Stags Head lane potholes
- Flooding at Red Cross Lane
- Potholes outside Rock and Ridge houses
- Potholes Sanctuary Lane
- Verge ploughing out is required across the parish.

ACTION CLERK report issues.

The Chairman advised that he and the Clerk had arranged to meet the local highways lead person on 10 January in order to visit Sanctuary Lane with a view to action to resolve the long-standing drainage issue.

525. DATE TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 7.30pm on Wednesday 5th February 2025 at Brompton Regis village hall.

Post meeting note: The February meeting was cancelled.

The meeting closed at 915 pm

Signed as a correct record:

Name: Date: