

HINTON CHARTERHOUSE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 7th May 2025 in the Memorial Hall, High Street, Hinton Charterhouse, commencing at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr. Willie Sturges (Chairman of the Parish Council) in the Chair
Cllrs: Roberston, Whiteley.
Dist.Cllr. F.Gourley
David Turvey – Parish Steward
One member of the public
Mr Geoffrey Parkes (Parish Clerk)

Apologies: Cllrs: Jones, Pilkington.

1. Chairman’s Opening Remarks

Cllr Willie Sturges welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman explained that residents are able to keep up with to date with what is happening in the village via the Parish Council Website, as well as the notice boards by the telephone box.

2. Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st May 2024

It was proposed by Cllr.Robertson and seconded by Cllr. Whiteley that the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st May 2024, be accepted as a correct record. All present agreed.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 1st May 2024
Be accepted. (The Minutes would be signed by the Chairman).

3. Chairman’s Report & Future of the Memorial Hall

Cllr. Willie Sturges wished to thank his fellow Councillors for all their work during the last year. He also thanked the many committees and groups of volunteers that make the Village work, namely: The Millennium Green Trust, Play Area Management Committee, the Memorial Hall Committee, the Toddlers group, and the Fete committees. As Chairman he also wished to thank the two part time employees of the Council, the Steward and the Clerk.

The Chairman said that one of the priorities in the coming year would be keeping the Memorial Hall functioning. There had been offers to buy the Hall but it was assumed that the Village would prefer to keep the existing building – as it would be very difficult to find the site or find funding for a new building from scratch.

Otherwise, the Chairman said there wasn’t a lot to report except that there were vacancies for new Parish Councillors and it would help to have more representation as there were bound to be new challenges and opportunities for the parish in the year ahead. The Council had considered only meeting every two months to reflect the current lull in overall activity but would continue with a monthly cycle for the present. It

may also move the routine meeting day to a Monday – just to make it slightly less likely to conflict with other activities.

5. Clerk's Report

The Parish Clerk opened his report with the Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2025. These were now complete and had been audited. The Government's Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) report forms were now ready for final approval at the Council's AGM (following this meeting).

The Clerk also reported that the Council had debated and approved the 2025-26 budget at its meetings in December 2024 and January 2025. The Council had a balance higher than anticipated as; 1) SSE had finally sorted out its financial systems and traced the Council's account – which gave HCPC a credit that will cover most of the next year's street light electricity costs. The remaining CIL funds would be allocated to a number of infrastructure projects in the village over the coming year. Combined these gave the Council a starting balance more than slightly higher than on 1st April 2024. (See Attachment Number 1 in the Minute Book).

Local Energy Project. The Clerk reported that Hinton Charterhouse Parish Council is in an agreement with both Freshford and Limpley Stoke Parish Councils, and Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) to facilitate briefings on a local energy project. A well attended village meeting had been held on 20th June 2024, and a follow on drop-in briefing session held again at the Hall in January 2025, as well as in neighbouring village halls. BWCE have said there would be further rounds of consultation if the Feasibility Study gave a positive result.

6 Planning Report

Cllr. Fraser Robertson recommended that residents go to the Parish Council website where they could find all the details of planning applications. There are also links on the B&NES website that can take you to all the relevant documents. Most applications were quite straight forward and HCPC had supported the majority, or else made comments only. Objections had been used only for applications that were clearly impractical or would have a significantly detrimental effect on neighbours, the community, or the environment.

If anyone feels strongly about a planning application then they are encouraged to make their comments direct to B&NES on the Planning Website as ultimately it is B&NES who make the decisions, not HCPC. Making public comments on the website does make a difference with B&NES and it is important to make your views known.

7. Parish Steward's Report

David Turvey reported that there were a small number of issues.

- i) The B3110 footway beyond the Brambles had become overgrown and the encroaching earth was narrowing the pavement. B&NES and SSE had helped clear some of this.
- ii) On other pathways the Steward said that the Council did not operate a 'scorched earth' policy and that some plants and vegetation were being allowed. The Clerk confirmed that the Council as a policy does not use chemical weeding (which requires training and certification costs), and as a responsible Authority it recognises the ecological emergency and the need for balance in all things. In

response to the public the Council would of course remove Ragwort or harmful weeds but as far as anyone knew there were none on Council land.

- iii) The Steward said he had been finding a lot of domestic waste that shouldn't be in the litter bins. The new bins (installed after Christmas with CIL funding) with 'letter box like' opening had slightly reduced this problem. There had been a reduction in dog poo on pavements; although there was still a mystery about the dog poo bin missing from the Millennium Green. B&NES had denied that it had taken it. The mystery continued.

9. Millennium Green Trust & Play Area

The Millennium Green Trust Committee had met the previous week. The gate to the play area had been redesigned to be self-closing. There was a need for a new roof on the shed and replacement of some of the wood on the climbing frame. The committee had met on site to agree a plan for which areas of bramble and nettle to control and which to leave – as always it represented a balance to match everyone's views and opinions. The rocker unit on the bike course would be removed to take away the noise irritation.

The management committee meets twice a year and always welcomes help and involvement from the Village as the Millennium Green is there for the benefit of all residents. It was now busy preparing for the Village Fete in July.

10. District Councillor Report

Dist.Cllr Gourley said she would like to thank residents for their patience while the design for the revised Glebe Bus Stop area was completed. She had had a useful meeting with First Bus company about the D2 and the D2X services and would continue to push for better rural bus support from the new WECA Mayor.

As our District Councillor she had arranged for visits to the village by both the leader of B&NES Council, and our new MP, to meet and discuss with residents the range of common problems in the community. She thanked Parish Councillors for helping with these, and as always, relaying communications to her.

On the subject of Highways she had been working on road safety initiatives; arranged a part resurfacing of Branch Road; and liaised with residents over the accident rate at Hogwood bend on the B3110 – especially during the A36 closure. The problems caused by the several-month-long closure of the A36 had meant she held a number of meetings with National Highways to try to mitigate against some of the inevitable impacts on local settlements.

Finally she said she would be very happy to provide support from the Ward Councillor's fund towards something like an information board on the Millennium Green; and that she had attended the very interesting BWCE presentation on Local Energy in the Village Hall last June.

The Chairman wished to record the Council's thanks for Dist.Cllr. Gourley's work in looking after Hinton Charterhouse's interests and in; 'fighting our corner'.

11. Public Questions and Discussions

The recent changes in education catchment areas were raised as a concern. It seemed that as the population of Bath expanded – particularly at Sulis Down and Mulberry Park – that children in Hinton Charterhouse were now being offered school places in

Writhlington – Radstock, rather than Bath. Which caused transport problems, amongst other issues. Dist.Cllr. Gourley asked if concerned parents could write to her and she could forward this to the relevant officers in B&NES.

Concerns had been raised by many residents about the growth in seemingly uncontrolled parties in the village with noise and disturbance going on into the early mornings – only recently from the Cricket Club.

The Theme for the Village Fete would be the ‘1980s’.

The Parish Steward said that a lot of useful information on the Village can be found on the Hinton Helpers network and that the Village Website now has a series of interviews with residents about life in the 1940s and 50s – The Voice of Hinton. David Turvey said the thanks went to James Mentz for arranging this.

12. Any other Business

There was no other business, so the Chairman wished to conclude by thanking Councillors who had carried out practical tasks to improve the village (Cllr.Jones with the bus stop greenery); thanking the Council’s two employees; and those such as Anita Unwin who had co-ordinated brightening up the High Street and the Green with decorations throughout the year.

13. Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 13th May 2026 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 7.40 pm. He invited members of the public to stay and join the Parish Council Annual General Meeting, that would be starting after a short break.