

ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th March 2025 at 6.30 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Fergusson, Cllr Hubbard, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Jackson, Clerk: D. McIlroy,
RFO: A. Stoye, J. Oerton (Enmore Memorial Hall committee member)

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Comley.
2. There were no Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2025 were approved and duly signed.
4. Cllr Hopkins welcomed Anne Shilton, the LCN link officer for Dowsborough district. She gave a short report on LCN meetings, working groups within areas (the Dowsbough area currently has one: Highways), her duties/responsibilities and the area she covered. She asked if there was anything she could take back to the LCN for discussion.
 - * Cllr Jackson commented on how helpful and supportive K. Tyson of Highways has been with regard to the speed restriction work within Enmore.
 - * Cllr Hubbard noted the lack of buses through Enmore and believed there was a Community transport fund available. A. Shilton stated that she would enquire at the next LCN meeting and ask for this topic to be discussed.

Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Shilton for spending time with the council.

5. Public Comments on Agenda Items and Questions on matters of concern.

J. Oerton asked to speak on behalf of Enmore Memorial Hall. She stated that the Hall required some major repairs to the flat roof at the rear of the property and fund raising, including grant applications, will be needed to finance this work. Exact cost figures were not available, as quotations are still being obtained for this work, but she asked the Council whether they would be prepared to offer some financial support for community projects such as this, especially if grants required match funding or evidence of community support.

Cllr Hopkins expressed the view that it was difficult to agree to give financial support in the absence of information about costs and possible grants and their conditions. He suggested that J. Oerton return to the Parish Council when more information is available. J Oerton thanked the Councillors for their time.

6. Actions arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

6.1 Speed management /SID update.

Cllr Hopkins has noted the lack of road markings in Enmore and felt that more SLOW signs painted on the road would increase the impact of the repeating speed signs. Cllr Jackson stated that a county surveyor had visited the area and had requested that yellow rumble strips be used as a warning, which are better suited to a rural environment. K. Tyson has stated that any extra road markings would need to be assessed and paid for outside of the exiting invoice for work completed. Cllr Hopkins felt strongly that this was an important issue and it should be

investigated further. He requested that this subject be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Jackson will email K. Tyson suggesting where SLOW road markings could be placed (on the double bend approaching the school and blind corners by the golf club) and asking for her comments.

It has been noted that the SID by the Enmore Inn has been hit again. Cllr Comley, at present on holiday, will deal with it when he returns. As this is the second time this has occurred, the subject of preventing further damage is to go on the next meeting's agenda.

ACTION: Cllr Comley to investigate damage and solutions for moving this SID.

- 6.2 Discuss costings for completed work & additional signage for horses/wild life.
Cllr Jackson has spoken to K. Tyson who confirmed that the signs have been ordered and who hopes that these will be in place within this financial year.
- 6.3 Broadband update.
There was no update in Cllr Comley's absence. However it was hoped that a Councillor would attend the LCN meeting on 12th March where a representative of CDS is scheduled to give an update on broadband connectivity.
- 6.4 Civil cemetery update.
Cllrs Jackson and Hucker had circulated a report prior to the meeting. The Burge family have cut back the hedge in the cemetery at the far side to expose the view.
Cllr Hucker has thanked them for undertaking this work.
- 6.5 Wilder Enmore update.
A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Links are still ongoing with Enmore church and school regarding school visits to the churchyard. Cllr Jackson has been asked to present on the Wilder Enmore initiative at the Quantock Hills National Landscape Partnership Wildlife Symposium on 5th July.

7. Proposed planning applications.
No new applications have been submitted.

8. Finance report/ approval of payments.

A. Stoye had provided a finance report including year-to-date accounts and a review of Budget v Actual expenditure for the year. This was circulated prior to the meeting and made available on the website.

As yet no invoice has been received for the Parish Council's share of work completed for the speed limit reduction through the village. It is intended that this will be paid promptly on receipt (assuming the amount is as expected and previously approved), with Councillors kept informed. All other known expenses have been settled.

A number of items included in the budget for the current year for reasons of prudence (in particular for expenditure outside the Parish Council's control) have not proved necessary, so the Council's finances were looking satisfactory at the year end. This year has seen the completion of some long-term projects and repayment of half the outstanding loan. This has reduced uncertainty as to the level of reserves to hold and reduced ongoing loan payments. She noted that £500 provision had been made in the budget for this year for supporting community projects and that this money had not yet been allocated.

Cllr Jackson suggested that the church, as a heritage building, should be given financial support, noting that it was difficult to raise funding for church matters through grants.

This item is to be put in the next agenda for discussion.

9. Report from Footpaths Officer.

Cllr Hubbard had circulated her report prior to the meeting. She was pleased to report that the number of wardens has not been cut and that John Melrose is our warden for Enmore.

There is a new kissing gate at the back of the school, replacing a stile, but it requires some strimming to make it visible. Cllr Hubbard will ask Luke, our volunteer strimmer, to attend to it. She was also aware of issues with over-cropping last year across footpaths and would be checking footpaths/bridleways to ensure this does not happen this year.

ACTION: Cllr Hubbard to speak to Luke regarding strimming around gate.

10. Report from Neighbourhood watch.

Cllr Fergusson had no news to report.

11. Discuss defibrillator funding from British Heart Foundation and placement in church porch.

Cllr Fergusson has applied to the British Heart foundation for a free defibrillator on behalf of the Parish Council. He was waiting to hear if he has been successful. As there is currently one at Enmore Golf Club, one at Cobbs Cross Farm and one at Smocombe Farm, the most suitable location would be in the porch of the church. There would be a connection charge expected to be of the order of £300 and a small ongoing cost of electricity (estimated as £60/year) to power it.

Cllr Hopkins stated that there was a Parochial Church Council meeting next week and he would ask that this be included on the agenda for discussion. Permission would need to be obtained from the church authorities but he would hope this would be given subject to funding from the Parish Council to the church. The Parish Council agreed in principle to fund this project.

ACTION: Cllr Hopkins to discuss with Enmore Parochial Church Council next week.

12. Report on meeting with Sir Ashley Fox MP (bus routes, planning enforcement, speed management)

All agreed that the meeting was productive.

Cllrs Jackson and Comley will be attending the Parish Summit organised by Sir Ashley in March and will report back to Council.

In principle, Sir Ashley's suggested approach to tackling lack of response from Somerset Council is to be adopted, with unanswered letters resent and copied in to the CEO of Somerset Council. However, there was concern that this change of approach, without warning, would jeopardise good relations and alienate Somerset Council officials. Accordingly, it was decided that letters currently unanswered should be resent to the original recipients only, with a note that a reply was required within a fortnight, and, if not received, then a letter will be sent to the CEO separately voicing our concerns.

ACTION: Cllr Hopkins and D. McIlroy to write letters of complaint to Highways regarding clearing of ditches and to Planning Enforcement for updates regarding planning breaches.

13. Training courses and their funding

A discussion took place regarding funding for Councillors attending training courses which had been attended comparatively recently by other Councillors. Although all Councillors recognised the importance of access to relevant training, views differed on whether all Councillors should be at liberty to attend any course they wished with the cost being met by the Parish Council. Past practice has been to share training materials from courses attended and to report on relevant learning points, and to avoid duplication of course attendance in order to make best use of taxpayer money.

A number of people who had attended such courses (to date all courses have been attended remotely using Zoom rather than in person) commented that there was little information provided other than the material on the slides and, in their opinion, it was hard to justify expenditure on a duplicate course unless some aspect of the law or good practice had changed in the meantime. As RFO, A. Stoye noted that there is a small budget for training but expressed concern about the potential cost of unlimited access to courses, taking the view that all expenditure should be justified by considering value for money for taxpayers.

A vote was taken and the proposal that Councillors should have unfettered rights to attend paid courses was defeated.

There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Signed:Date:
Chairman of Council

NEXT MEETING Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 7.30 pm.
NB. AGM of Enmore Parish Council 6th May 2025 at 7.15 pm
and Enmore Parish Assembly 20th May at 7.30 pm