WEST CAMEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the West Camel Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7:30 pm in the Conference Room at The Davis Hall.

Present:	Chairman	**Kathy Miller-Hunt (KMH)**
	Councillors	**Mick Richens (MR)**
		Jane Lawrence (JL)
		Jo Roberts (JR)
	Clerk	**Angela Suter (AS)**

Somerset Council Councillor – **Cllr Henry Hobhouse (HH), Cllr Kevin Messenger (KM)**

Members of the public – 1

0126.01 Electors' Participation – Discussion with resident PH over when the bridleway running along the A303 from Podimore to Sparkford would be opening as currently the gate is closed and chained up so no access. Henry advised this had been handed over to Somerset Council. Pursue with National Highways and Galliford Try **(AS)**
Nice shiny new gates from QC to WC until the boundary between Queen Camel and West Camel where there is still a stile and the old black gate. Contact SC **(AS)**

0126.02 Apologies for Absence – Cliff Baker (CB), Jenny Down (JD), Geoff Chapman (GC)

0126.03 Minutes of the last meeting (06/11/25) to be agreed and signed - The minutes were agreed by all councillors and were duly signed by MR and AS.

0126.04 Matters of Report arising from the previous meeting minutes (not on the agenda) – None.

0126.05 Declaration of Interest and details of dispensations requested / granted since last meeting (councillors and/or visiting councillors). – None.

0126.06 Somerset Council Councillor feedback – HH announced SC had received a settlement from the government and there is a budget meeting on the 21/01/26 and he will brief us at the March meeting. HH also reported his disappointment that SC had undersold assets bought with public money. New staircase and lifts for Castle Cary station. HH also raised the issue of Natural England managing funds across the moors and levels but with no data. HH reported Bridgehampton had flooded again in the last heavy rain, drains all clear but the outfall is too low so this will continue to happen. Unitary map **(AS to resend)** to councillors as we will now be part of the Blackmore Vale area.

0126.07 Standing Items of Business

a. **Footpath/RoW**
AS read out LS email regarding gate replacing stile between Queen Camel and West Camel as already mentioned by elector. LS had written to Eve Wynn about this and a permissive path from Fore Street to the bakery. Application possibly to CBF for a gate. HH mentioned Eve Wynn no longer the RoW officer and he will provide follow up details. **AS to contact LS and Somerset Council.**

b. **Environment**
   i. Flood Mitigation Proposals 2025/26 – JR read out an email from LS following the recent river clearance from Willows to Old Mill. Tools required and bigger life jackets needed – to be priced up **(JR)**. Possibly also an outboard motor - it was decided this was not required at this

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stage. Use of the boat to survey the river within the Parish boundary and a photographic report of each riparian owner's section of the river bank. This would enable contact to be made regarding riparian owners' duties. Discussion ensued regarding the use of a drone for the survey and/or a party of 3-4 people travelling down the river in a boat taking photographs. Survey to also investigate the state of surface water drains into the river and a remedial report drawn up for discussion with SC Highways. **(JL)**
It was also discussed that the boat should be moved back to storage from the Old Mill where it currently sits. **(JR)**

ii. AS read out an email received from EA to advise they were unable to assist with vegetation clearance from Chantry Lane and hoped that we could continue this work as in previous years.

iii. River Clearance Update – Riparian owners to be contacted in advance of the summer so they can programme in their works. **(JR/JL/CB)**

c. **Play Area / Ground**

i. Ground clearance and maintenance alongside tennis court completed with a number of volunteers giving up their Saturday & Sunday which was much appreciated. This did highlight an issue with the state of the boards along the bottom of the tennis court which are in a sorry state. Jo has a number of quotes for various options and will send these out to councillors via email for consideration at the next meeting. **(JR)**

ii. AS advised council that Jo had taken on the tasks of monthly playground inspections/ 3 monthly defibrillator checks and organisation of the mowing schedule. Council thanked her for this. Following the play inspection carried out in 2025 a number of items were raised for repair/replacement. Jo has investigated this and got quotes to replace 2 boards on the climbing frame and to repair some of the rubber surfacing using money ring fenced from the playpark fundraising. New goal posts have also been ordered. All agreed to proceed with the repairs as quoted. **(JR)**

d. **Community Housing Scheme**

i. Plot 1 – second period starts 1st March 2026

ii. Plot 7 - sale on schedule for completion.

e. **Traffic Calming**

i. SID's – Howell Hill proposed as a permanent fixture/site for the SID as seems to have a positive impact on speed down the hill. A second SID to be purchased (estimated costs £2500) that could be a 'floating SID' - Plowage, Southmead other 30 mph areas within the village. Discussion ensued but opinion divided as to whether they actually work well enough to warrant another, where is the hard data? Perhaps a CBF application could be done by a councillor? Discuss further at March meeting.

f. **Community Engagement & Communication**

i. Website upgrade our village website is clunky, hard to navigate and not very easy to find statutory information. Several new obligations come into effect this year as well as being able to provide evidence of responsible digital governance. AS has investigated several local parish websites and made contact with CK Creative who has responded with an estimated (reduced) cost of around £600. The old website would still be running whilst the new site is built. All in favour to proceed. **(AS)**

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g. **Parish Council Processes / Unitary Authority Update**
   i. Temporary clerk cover. Personnel meeting to be held in February to discuss. **(MR)**
   ii. Organisation chart initiated by MR discussion regarding roles and responsibilities of each councillor and their contributions. Discussed at January meeting chart to be completed and issued. **(MR)**

h. **Highways**
   i. Chapter 8 training – Another person required to be trained. A name has been put forward but further investigation required as to the time element of the training and location. Investigate. **(AS)**
   ii. Lengthsman assistance – a volunteer has been assisting the Lengthsman and will continue as necessary. Jo has been doing some research into the work done by our lengthsman and what other parishes are paying. Charges ranged from £277+vat for one day a week which was a contract for every week, regardless of whether there was work to do to £25p/h on an ad hoc basis. Following on this discussion it was agreed to increase the hourly rate to £25. Nominated MR Seconded KMH Agreed All.

i. **Community Benefit Fund (CBF)**
   One new application for £158 from WCPC to run 2 free community defibrillator and CPR awareness courses on the 27th January. Village email to be circulated. **Approved**. AS to co-ordinate event.

0126.08 Correspondence / Other matters requiring action

a. Resident contact regarding Blackmore Vale Hunt incident at West Camel Solar Farm. Discussed and no action to be taken as a parish council as this occurred on privately owned land. **AS** to email by return.

0126.09 Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer Report

a. Interim fidelity check to be carried out by KMH.
b. Budget build 2026/27 – CB points sent by email raised and discussed. No amendments at this stage. All Agreed. **AS to post as required.**
c. Precept for 2026/2027 – Discussed by all. Agreed to keep at 2025/2026 level of £22,400 but this will now be received in 2 instalments. April & September. **AS to notify SC of precept requirement.**
d. Payment Authorisation – Agreed by all. Those highlighted in yellow paid prior to the meeting.

Cheque No. or OP Ref	Payee	Service / Goods Purchased	Amount
41/2526	PFK LING	STRIMMER PART	16.78
42/2526	LOXTON GROUNDCARE	STIGA MOWER SERVICE & REPAIR	613.91
44/2526	L STEVENS	MOWER FUEL	47.15
45/2526	J STAMP	LENGTHSMAN DUTIES NOVEMBER	230.00
46/2526	CK CREATIVE	WEBSITE HOSTING	90.00
47/2526	SALC	Cllr train (Jo Roberts)	35.00

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	A Suter	Expenses 06/11/25-08/01/26	31.98
	HMRC	Q3 PAYE	332.16
	NetWorld Sports	Goal Post	436.94
Total			**£1,834.12**

0126.10 Planning Applications

New planning applications – None to report.

Planning Updates – None to report.

0126.11 Matters of Report / Future Business

a. **Other Matters of Report -** none.
b. **Matters of Future Business** – Health & Wellbeing funding.

0126.12 Date of next meeting – Thursday 5th March 2026 in the Davis Hall Committee Room.

0126.13 The meeting closed at 21.25pm

Signed..... **.....**
Chairman Date 5th March 2026 **Clerk Date 5th March 2026**

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