

EXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 28th July 2026 in Bridgetown Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Robert Takle (RT, Chairman), Colin Rawle (CR), Tonia Matthews (TM), Janette Sapsford (JS), Steve Rowe (SR) and Jennifer Yates (Clerk, JY).

Somerset Councillors Frances Nicholson (FN) and Steven Pugsley (SP) attended the first part of the meeting.

The meeting was opened at 19.30.

1. Apologies: Guy Thomas-Everard and Frances Williams

2. Declaration of Interests: None

3. Public Question Time: None

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th May 2026 and matters arising: The minutes were approved as a true record, proposed SR, seconded JS.

5. Updates from Somerset Councillors: The Council have re-issued their request for salt bag and bin updates. Exton has completed their return at the beginning of June but will resend and include Mr Kali Martin to ensure their information is received. There is a new permanent Accounts manager at Somerset Council and it is hoped that she will be able to draw on the recommendations made by interim managers and make a real impact to begin to resolve their financial difficulties. It appears that the new Prime Minister wishes to make some changes to the ways in which authorities are funded so it is important to keep an eye on all updates as this could affect both county and parish funding. The National Park is beginning work on its Local Plan later in the year and again this is something to keep an eye on so that the Parish Council can submit thoughts and ideas when appropriate.

6. Highways Matters: Salt bins and bags communication as above. It does not appear that work has taken place on many of the issues reported on the portal several months ago and JY will revisit this. SP did mention that it may be that the issues have been noted and work is planned so it is worth following up to check whether that is the case before re-reporting and JY will follow up accordingly. The cats eyes have still not been replaced on the Taunton Road to Raleigh's Cross from Heathpoult, but SP believes it was scheduled to take place this week. CR reported concern that large vehicles are being pushed out into the middle of the road as they enter the village from the Copleham end due to overgrown hedging. He and TM will follow up with the landowner. The banks have not yet had their annual trim in any of the lanes and in places the vegetation is brushing both sides of vehicles as they pass through. SP reported that this work has been carried out in the Withypool area this week and therefore it is hoped this parish will be not far behind.

- 7. Assertion 10 progress update:** The website is in place and all councillors now have gov.uk email addresses. JY will send out details of how to set it up on devices and computers shortly.
- 8. Finance:** TM reported that the defibrillator is not currently working despite new batteries. She has removed it from The Circuit and will see if she can get it mended. If not the last one was purchased with the involvement of the Parish Council and the same arrangement would be beneficial.
- a) Finance report and agree payments to be made:** Payments were agreed to Fluid Labs £474, Zurich Insurance £168, Payroll Services £144 and Somerset Association of Local Councils £105.28. Proposed JS, seconded CR
- b) AGAR annual return:** Discussion took place re the rise in carry forward and money held in savings. It was recognised that these savings were planned to bring the Parish Council into a better position should there be a need for an unexpected spend (such as the defibrillator or an election) or purchase of contractor time for work such as gully and culvert clearance. Although the savings do appear to be generous when seen as a percentage of the overall precept in reality these are small amounts which would be used up quickly as the cost of services is now large. This will be considered at the next budget setting meeting in January.
- The Annual Accounts and Returns were reviewed and agreed. Proposed CR, seconded SR and approved by all.
- 12. Next steps for preparedness sub-committee:** It was agreed it would be beneficial to arrange a short sub-committee meeting to clarify next steps.
- 13. Feedback from councillors on meetings or training attended:** None. JY was asked to find out the current position re Somerset Bus Partnership as we do not seem to have received any emails recently. SR would like to attend the next LCN meeting along with JS.
- 14. Any Other Business:** The phone boxes in both villages have been painted and look very smart. The one in Bridgetown is not working and JY was asked to find out the position re purchasing it as it appears other local parishes have done so with theirs when it became non-operational. The owners of the Badgers Holt pub are willing to maintain and develop it should the Parish Council become the owners.

The recent Xmoor-Rox event was very successful. Funds were raised for several charities including the Exton Church Bells, the Exmoor Search and Rescue Team and the Blood Bikes scheme.

15. Date of next meeting 7th September 2026

There being no further business RT closed the meeting at 20.33