

# BARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Julie Ferguson

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## Minutes of the Barrington Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held at Barrington Village Hall on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 18:00hrs.

**Present:** Cllrs: Jane Harker (Chair), Cllr Don Bourne, Cllr Peter Oakes, Cllr John Sheffield, Cllr Teeuw Rolaff, Somerset Cllr Richard Wilkins, Julie Ferguson (Parish Clerk) and 18 parishioners.

18:00 – Meeting opened

### 1 WELCOME AND REPORT FROM THE CHAIR.

Cllr Harker welcomed and thanked everyone for coming along.

Chairs Report. (App.1).

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from:

Parish Cllr Neil McLean

Parish Cllr Christine Sheffield

Somerset Cllr Jo Roundell-Greene

Somerset Cllr Adam Dance

### 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

**RESOLVED:** To **APPROVE** and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

### 4 ANNUAL REPORTS FROM PARISH GROUPS.

To hear any reports from parish groups (App.2).

- a. Barrington Village Hall
- b. Barrington Art Group
- c. Barrington Players
- d. Barrington Footpath volunteers
- e. Barrington Church groups – Flowers, Events, Cleaning and Churchyard clear-ups.
- f. Barrington In Bloom
- g. Barrington Bell Ringers

### 5 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

Somerset Cllr Richard Wilkins introduced himself and explained that after the next election, there would only be a single Somerset Councillor representing Barrington, due to the boundary review implementation.

18:55 – Meeting closed

# Barrington Parish Council Annual Report 2025-26

## 1. Chairman's Statement

The Parish Council is pleased to present its Annual Report, outlining the work undertaken during the past year and setting out priorities for the year ahead. The Council remains committed to safeguarding the character of Barrington, supporting the wellbeing of residents, and ensuring that the parish's interests are effectively represented within the wider Somerset unitary authority.

We extend our appreciation to all councillors, volunteers, community groups, and residents whose contributions continue to strengthen the social, environmental, and cultural fabric of the village. Sincere thanks are given to Councillor Don Bourne who stepped back from his position as Chair of the Parish Council this year. Don's leadership and guidance and care for the village has ensured that the village is in good financial and community health. We are pleased to retain his knowledge as he continues to serve as a councillor. We would like to thank Councillor Robert Stenner who stood down from the Council at the beginning of the year for his service. We welcomed Councillor Teeuw Rolaff in his place.

## 2. Council Composition and Governance

The Council met regularly throughout the year in accordance with statutory requirements. Meetings were conducted with full agendas, published minutes, and adherence to the principles of transparency and good governance.

The Parish Clerk has continued to provide essential administrative, financial, and advisory support, ensuring compliance with legislative obligations including the Local Government Act, financial regulations, and audit requirements. A Parish Council is part of local government, and it is essential that we comply with the appropriate legislation.

Councillors have maintained active engagement with residents, attended relevant training, and participated in consultations at parish and county levels.

Much of the work of the Parish Council is unseen by many of our residents, but we do actively encourage people to bring issues and ideas to our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall. Always a warm welcome!

We are well supported by our Somerset Councillors, Jo Roundell-Green and Adam Dance who regularly attend our meetings and get involved to help solve problems and offer support on a variety of issues. We thank them both for their time and attention.

## 3. Planning and Development Control

The Council reviewed all planning applications submitted within the parish boundary and provided formal observations to Somerset Council as the Local Planning Authority. The Council's approach has remained consistent: to support development that is proportionate, sustainable, and sympathetic to the village's historic and rural character.

Key considerations included:

- Preservation of the conservation area and listed buildings
- Appropriate scale, design, and materials in new development
- Impacts on local infrastructure, highways, and drainage
- Impact on residents and the wider community

The Council will continue to monitor the progress of Somerset's Local Plan and thus participate in consultations to ensure Barrington's needs are fully represented.

A total of 8 planning applications and one appeal were considered and members of the Council liaised with residents to gain information to support decision making.

#### **4. Highways, Footpaths, and Public Realm**

The maintenance and improvement of the parish's public spaces remain a central responsibility. Over the past year, the Council has:

- **Reported and monitored defects including potholes and drainage issues.** Councillors have cleared drains, particularly on Ruskway Lane and Main Street, and cut back the encroaching bank to uncover a footpath widening the road opposite the Priory. Assistance has been given in cutting back hedges to ensure safety and improve drainage. Litter picking is regularly undertaken by councillors.
- **Liaised with Somerset Highways regarding verge cutting, road safety, and traffic concerns.** We have built on the relationship between Highways and the PC following last year's walks with both Highways staff and County Councillors to improve gully clearing, and to gain action on problem areas for road flooding at the junction of Shelway and Ruskway Lane. Further action will be taken by Highways on both roads to be undertaken in the summer months.
- **Started the process for the purchase of a new Speed Indicator Device (SID).** One of the main topics of concern expressed at last year's APM was the perceived speeding of traffic through the village. The Parish Council's response is to purchase a new Speed Indicator Device for the village. The process has begun with the item being added to the budget, and the process is underway to enter a Memorandum of Agreement with Somerset Council. Two councillors are to undertake the necessary training required and so the process is moving forward towards installation.
- **Road and footpath gritting.** Councillors were out in the recent cold snap gritting the main road and some footpaths in the village. We were assisted in some parts of the village by volunteers who proactively gritted the roads. We thank them and will be looking to expand a group of volunteers to help going forward. An additional bin is being purchased.
- **Supported the upkeep of public rights of way, including waymarking and vegetation clearance.** We would like to thank our outgoing Parish Paths Officer Patrick Wenham for his sterling work, not least for his co-ordination of our volunteers who regularly turn out to help keep our footpaths clear and useable. The Council acknowledges the valuable contribution of volunteers who assist with footpath maintenance and environmental stewardship and thank them for their contribution. We have met with our Rights of Way Warden from Somerset Council regarding the state of Lobbs Lane footpath which has been severely impacted by water runoff, and have progressed the replacement of a bridge and stiles with gates. The monitoring of Lobbs Lane has continued through the winter.

#### **5. Community Facilities and Local Initiatives**

The Council has continued to support community organisations and activities that enhance village life. This has included:

- **Management and oversight of the recreation field and associated facilities.** Significant hedging and tree maintenance was undertaken at the recreation field. Councillors continue to work on the wood with volunteers who give their time and expertise, for which we thank them.
- **Support for allotment holders and the administration of allotment plots** The Parish Council encouraged the installation of IBC water containers to harvest water runoff from shed roofs. The specific insurance for the plots was reviewed and found to be an unnecessary cost as the same cover is now provided by the Council's main insurance policy.
- **Small grants to local groups delivering social, cultural, or environmental benefits** Support by way of a grant to the Barrington in Bloom team of volunteers. Sadly, the effort of refreshing the meadow was not

successful due to the prolonged drought last summer. It is hoped that this year will see a better outcome.

- **Collaboration with community partners on events and village improvements** The PC has continued to support such Village events as Barrington Day, and the VE Day celebrations.

The Council remains committed to fostering an inclusive, active, and resilient community.

## **6. Financial Report**

The status of the Parish Council's finances are shared with the village by means of the minutes of meetings on the Parish Council's website.

One of the key responsibilities of the Parish Council is to set the Precept. This is the money we raise from our parishioners via the Council Tax process.

The precept for 2025-26 was set at £22,196. We have increased the precept request for 2026-27 to £23,110, an increase in the amount raised for the Parish Council of £914, but a reduction in the PC element of Council tax to residents of 20p for a band D.

The only significant difference between the 2025-26 budget and 2026-27 budget is the creation of a new budget: **Parish/highway safety** of £3k.

Grants awarded in this year were £350 to Barrington Football club, £500 to Barrington In Bloom and £750 to the PCC.

## **8. Priorities for the Forthcoming Year**

The Council's strategic priorities for the coming year include:

- Continued engagement with Somerset Council on planning, highways, and service delivery
- Enhancement of footpaths, public spaces, and recreational facilities
- Strengthening communication with residents through improved digital and traditional channels
- Supporting community groups and local initiatives
- The development of an Emergency and Incident Plan for the village to ensure resilience and safety of all residents, but particularly the most vulnerable. We are looking to create a team of volunteers with skills who are willing to come forward and offer their time and expertise for the benefit of the village.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

The Parish Council expresses its sincere thanks to all residents, volunteers, partner organisations, and local representatives who have contributed to the wellbeing of Barrington over the past year. Their commitment and cooperation remain essential to the parish's success.

There have been many events in the Village Hall, and the tireless work of the Trustees means we have this excellent building to act as a focal point for bringing the community together. Thanks also to those who voluntarily organise events such as quizzes, gin tasting, New Year's Eve Party to mention just a few.

## **10. Conclusion**

Barrington continues to thrive as a distinctive, welcoming, and community-minded village. The Parish Council remains dedicated to responsible governance, careful stewardship of resources, and the long-term wellbeing of the parish. We look forward to working collaboratively with residents in the year ahead.

## **Barrington Village Hall Chair of Trustees Report**

At the recent Village Hall AGM Trustees Colin Stevens, Phil Roberts and Amanda Gould opted not to seek re-election, all have done sterling work for the Hall, and are thanked for their hard work and commitment. I have enjoyed their company in trustee meetings and beyond. Amanda has kindly offered to remain as our bookings secretary which is a real help and ensures continuity with our regular hirers with whom Amanda has built a great rapport.

At the AGM three people were voted on as new (replacement) trustees, and we look forward to working together to support our great village asset and hub. Our new Trustees are Nick Hemmings, Mark Hoare, and Tom McKnight.

This year is the 20th Anniversary of the opening of the BVH, which is great testament to all the people who have supported the venture over the years and thanks to the efforts of everyone who has helped to get us to where we are with such a wonderful village asset. However 20 years means that maintenance is becoming more of a challenge, and trustees efforts (and spend) have necessarily focussed on this during the past year.

Items we have addressed over the past year include:

- Establishment of a Child Protection Policy.
- A Fire Drill policy was implemented, and test evacuations completed successfully.
- Issues raised at our Annual External Fire risk assessment were relatively minor, and have been addressed.
- Our CCTV has been upgraded, and a Policy for its management and monitoring has been created. This covers CCTV cameras in the Lyle Room, the Main Hall and outside.
- Wi-Fi has been updated using more current technology, and will better support coverage across the playing field which is important for the Fete where traders are increasingly reliant on electronic payments.
- Our Intruder Alarm was replaced, and a new key safe was installed. This effort does (finally) seem to have resolved the issue of false alarms causing a local nuisance following from a number of previous procedural changes and “tinkering” with the door sensors. Special thanks to Ray Ede for his leadership and work on this issue.
- A new Projector and Screen were purchased for use in the BVH, it is currently located in the Lyle Room where it has been used to screen sporting events, but it can be moved to the BVH as required, and projects well onto the wall at the rear of the stage.
- Main Hall redecoration and fire treatment of the stage curtains was completed plus cleaning and painting of external doors and windows (special thanks to Phil Roberts for his Herculean efforts).
- Various fixes to the Play Equipment were completed addressing safety issues identified by our internal checks, and external assessment. Thanks are offered to the PC for arranging the removal of a large tree to the side of the Play Area which had been identified as dangerous (suffering from Ash dieback).

Events during the past year have included:

- Defibrillator and First Aid Training session (open to all) was run in the Lyle Room.
- Our hugely successful Xmas Fayre was enjoyable and profitable, thanks to all who helped with setting up and running that.
- Running of the monthly Coffee Morning was taken on by Andrew Hale, and thanks to him and his helpers for making this so successful.

As well as our regular hires, other successful hires included an excellent Wedding, with great feedback from the hirers, Bertie’s Big Band evening enjoyed by all who attended, and Barrington Players ever popular and much anticipated “Who dunnit”.

Nicky Clark is working with a great team of helpers on the Summer Fete, but all offers of help would be appreciated!

Thanks to Anita the 100 Club continues to provide welcome income for us, and if anyone would like to join please contact Anita who would love to sign you up!

The Lyle Room now has two new directors, and is looking to build on the success of last year, as well as addressing some of the challenges that impacted the finances last year.

The Lyle Room is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, as well as hosting events which have included quizzes, 6 Nations Rugby, a Gin tasting, as well as private hires. It's a great village asset as well as a village hub, and a great place to come and meet people and chat in an informal atmosphere.

We look forward to the village's continued support for both the Lyle Room and the Hall in the coming months, and both the Hall Trustees and Lyle Room Directors will be working hard to deliver events that villagers and those from further afield will enjoy. Please contact any of the Trustees or Directors if you have any ideas for events that you would like us to put on, and a big thank you to all who have supported the Hall and the Lyle Room in the past year.

### **Barrington Art Group**

The Barrington Art group meet in the hall one morning a week during term times. They are a group of drawing and painting enthusiasts of mixed ability who simply enjoy using this large bright space to be creative in the company of others while working on their own individual projects. Newcomers are welcome to join us.

Very soon, thanks to a generous donation by the Parish Council of picture frames, their artworks will form a colourful rolling display in the village hall stairway.

### **Barrington Players**

The Barrington Players is a small friendly amateur dramatic society which was formed twenty years ago when this hall, their home, was built. The society is a major hirer of the hall and recently donated £800 for the hall to purchase new, but safer, stage lighting. The Players aim to put on a show - usually a comedy play or murder mystery - every year.

But even a two-night performance takes a huge amount of planning, learning of lines, rehearsals, sourcing of props, scenery building etc., so they are always looking for helpers - as well as potential actors! - and would welcome anyone interested in helping out and joining in the fun - and it is fun! - on or off stage.

### **Barrington Footpaths**

In the last year, the following activity has happened on Barrington's network of footpaths:

- A group of volunteers helped clear fallen trees and branches on Lobbs Lane.
- A bridge was replaced on the footpath leading away from Ruskway Lane following liaison between the Somerset Area Warden and the Barrington Parish Pathways Liaison Officer.
- A new stile was installed next to the new bridge.
- Fingerpost sign posts have been repaired, replaced or installed.
- A new step has been installed at the bottom of the footpath leading up from Copse Shute Lane.
- Some of the most used pathways around the parish have been maintained either via a volunteer day or due to periodic maintenance by volunteers.
- Clearing a fallen tree that was blocking a pathway near Westport canal.

A group of 14 year olds from the village and local area are in the process of contributing towards footpath maintenance as part of the volunteer element of their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards

Thank you to villagers who have contributed towards keeping the parish's pathways clear for all to enjoy.

Patrick Wenham has passed on the mantle of being Parish Pathways Liaison Officer to Matthew Rowswell so that Patrick and Anita can concentrate their energies on helping coordinate the planning for Barrington Day 2027. Matthew had been a stalwart of the voluntary work even before taking over the role of PPLO. Thank you to all those who have voluntarily given their time to maintain our pathway network and the support of the parish council for supporting these endeavours.

## **Church groups: Flowers, Events, Cleaning and Churchyard clear-ups**

St Mary's Barrington benefits from a fabulous group of villagers who volunteer to ensure the church has flowers in the chancel alcoves throughout the year, as well as creating more extensive displays in the church for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. Every other year, we really go to town for the Barrington Day Flower Festival, adorning the church with wonderful flower arrangements and displays throughout the church.

The group, on occasion, is also asked by villagers to support weddings, christenings and funerals, so please feel free to contact us. We are a very relaxed group and no previous flower arranging experience is needed, just a willingness to 'have a go' - everyone is so very welcome to come along and enjoy good company and plenty of tea and cake!! Please email Anita: [anitawenham2@gmail.com](mailto:anitawenham2@gmail.com) or Annie: [creegie@yahoo.com](mailto:creegie@yahoo.com) if you are interested in joining this group.

The deep cleaning of the church is overseen by Jan Collis and generally takes place every two months, with a call out to villagers who are happy to come along for an hour or so to ensure our old church is kept at its best - polishing the wood, brass and general dusting, hoovering and sweeping. Again, please email Anita: [anitawenham2@gmail.com](mailto:anitawenham2@gmail.com) if you would be happy to donate an hour or two of your time to join this group of volunteers.

The general maintenance of the church is overseen by Matthew Rowswell, but twice a year a call out goes to the village for additional volunteers, with the promise of tea and cake, to help trim, prune, sweep and weed the paths and around the graveyard. Please look out on Facebook for any planned churchyard clear-up events if you are able to volunteer an hour or so of your time or email Matthew: [matthewrowswell61@gmail.com](mailto:matthewrowswell61@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining this group.

## **Barrington in Bloom**

Barrington in Bloom was launched in 2023 by a small group of volunteers who came together to form a committee, aiming to use the RHS Bloom initiative to further enhance our beautiful village, putting community and friendship at its core.

Following two fabulous Gold winning years, we feel the village and villagers have proved what they can do and what a beautiful place we are privileged to look after. We have decided not to formally enter the RHS Bloom competition this year, but Barrington in Bloom, as a thriving group of volunteers, will continue. We are going to keep the popular wheelbarrows going and will be shortly refreshing them with new bedding plants as the spring bulbs have now gone over. We will also continue to maintain the large village hall bed and planters, the planting of bulbs throughout the village, including the church and village green and supporting the churchyard clear-ups. We will also continue to support the woodland and wildflower meadow group and will, this year, be supporting the Parish Council with an application for a Lottery grant to enable improvements to the village notice boards and accessible seating.

We have a Bloom volunteer WhatsApp group where we put out requests for help with various projects throughout the year. We are so grateful to those that give their time to support the group. If you would like to join, please contact Laura, Kathy or Anita via [Barringtoninbloom@gmail.com](mailto:Barringtoninbloom@gmail.com) or DM the Bloom Facebook page.

## **Barrington Bell Ringers**

- Six ringers living in Barrington.
- Practice on Monday night's @ Shepton Beauchamp with ringers from Shepton, Puckington and Kingstone.
- Thanks to the village for supporting fundraisers and tolerating the rather loud bells!
- Available to ring for services, weddings, funerals or any special occasions.

## **End of Parish Group Reports.**