NEROCHE PARISH COUNCIL

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Draft minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Neroche Parish Council held at Neroche Hall on Tuesday 20th October 2026.

In Attendance: Cllrs Mr M Palmer (Chair), Mr J Parsons, Mr D Macey, Mrs S. Hayman (note taker) and Mrs K. Street

Also Present: Cllr Sarah Wakefield and one member of the public.

Public Session: None

2026/76 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from. Mr T Pope, Mrs C Stamper

This was recognised as an approved absence for the purposes of s185 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2026/77 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

2026/78 Actions from the minutes of the last meeting

2026/79 Report from the County Councillor – Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Cllr Wakefield referred to her previously circulated report and provided the following updates:

- **Flooding:** A two-year Community Programme is available to parishes experiencing flooding, supported by £650,000 of Central Government funding allocated to Somerset Council.
- **Highways:** Somerset Highways has been contacted regarding gullies and drains which remain blocked despite previous clearance, with assurances that outstanding issues will be addressed. Cllr Wakefield has also raised concerns about faded or missing road markings and damaged signage within the parish.
- **Parish Plan:** Cllr Wakefield has contacted Jim Clayton, Chair of Taunton Town Garden Centre Board, regarding his experience of preparing a Parish Plan and will pass the information to Cllr Palmer.
- **Orchard Portman Development:** Taylor Wimpey intends to submit the Orchard Portman site to Somerset Council for consideration for housing. A full environmental assessment will be required, with the Planning Department expected to identify suitable sites by Easter 2027. The revised list of sites is anticipated by September 2027, followed by public consultation. Cllr Wakefield emphasised the importance of protecting existing settlements and remaining vigilant as the Local Plan progresses.
- **Local Plan:** It may be possible under the National Planning Policy Framework to adopt a 15-year rather than 25-year plan, potentially affecting the need for development at Orchard Portman. Other proposed developments south of the M5 are considered more likely to proceed, as land options have already been secured.

- **Planning Obligations:** Cllr Wakefield explained that Section 106 agreements provide for infrastructure and other requirements associated with development. She noted the complexity of these arrangements and suggested that increased construction costs may affect the viability of the Orchard Portman proposal. Taylor Wimpey would also need to liaise with neighbouring landowners regarding access and other matters.
- **Political Representation:** Gideon Amos MP has written to the Government questioning the criteria and process surrounding the original sale of the Orchard Portman site.
- **Nexus 25:** An announcement regarding a prospective new purchaser is expected shortly, although the identity remains unknown.
- **Save the Blackdown Vale:** Cllr Wakefield expressed support for the group's work in protecting the Vale and stressed the importance of continued vigilance.

Cllr Wakefield advised that she would be unable to attend the following month's meeting due to her attendance at a screening of the *Emergencies Briefing* film.

2026/80 Actions from Minutes of the last meeting

1. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Palmer is snowed under at the moment as we have no Clerk. Cllr Macey suggested he work with Stoke St Mary
2. Save the Blackdown Vale donation. Stoke St Mary have a voucher towards a SID which they have decided is not required.

   Options: Offer to make a donation for the SID voucher. How much? This would be an initial offer. Further donation to the cause as we have monies saved which were intended to fight the
   upgrading of the A358 to a dual carriageway.
3. APM review - positive event

2026/81 Items of Report and Correspondence

1. LCN - Cllr Palmer is waiting for notice of the new Community Network Officer after the departure of the current officer.
2. Dedication of the Taunton Field of Remembrance - no one available to attend

2026/82 Report from the Local Community Network

Nothing to report.

2026/83 Planning and Applications

To discuss and review planning applications received since the last meeting:
Nothing to report.

2026/84 Rights of Way Update

Nothing to report.

2026/85 Environmental Matters

Report any flooding to the Council as extra funds have been given by the Government to Somerset as flooding was so extreme last year. This consists of £650.000 plus a further £50.000

2026/86 Finance

The following items were approved for payment:

- Open Spaces Society subscription £45.00
- Clerks leaving present to M Palmer £124.29

- Refreshment to WI for the APM £75.00

All payments approved

2026/87 Highways

Potholes reported now repaired
Accident: car in the hedge at Badger Street on 13/14th October
SID update
One gully has been cleared at one side of Brandy Bridge while the road is closed for bank repairs. It was found that 7/8th of it is blocked with dried earth. Inspection of the other gully was not possible due to heavy plant obstructing it.

2026/88 Community Matters

Contingency Plan Update: Mr Macey has obtained a quote for a generator for the Village Hall of £7,800.00 plus VAT.
Mr Parsons has spoken to the V Hall electrician who has recommended a three phase generator. A further discussion took place as there was conflicting information. Mrs Street offered to ask a relative who works for Western Power to contact Mark in an effort to clarify the situation.

A vote was taken to agree to purchase a generator (in principle) for the Village Hall.
Proposed by Mr Parsons
Seconded by Mr Macey
Agreed by all present

2026/89 To consider candidates for co-option.

2026/90 Date of Next Meeting and Items for the Agenda

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 November 2026 at Neroche Hall at 7.30pm

The meeting was declared closed at 21.20