

LOXTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 12th May 2025 **Following the Annual meeting of the Parish Council at 7.00pm** (There were 2 members of the public present)

1. Chairman's welcome to the public -The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.32 pm.
2. Apologies for Absence- None
3. The minutes of the meeting of 13th May 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair.
4. Chair's Summary of the Year:

The difficult financial climate continues to affect local authorities and North Somerset Council is particularly challenged when it comes to funding its obligation and wishes. It is inevitable that smaller rural parishes such as ours will be low down on the list of spending priorities.

Although it is pleasing to note that work has started on the long overdue Banwell bypass, the condition of the roads in our Parish is still the largest source of complaints from our residents. Weston Lane in Christon has been resurfaced although part of the work had to be repeated due to incorrect tarmac being used. Arguably Church Lane and Hillview Road in Loxton were in a worse state but they remain an issue. The Parish Council continues to press North Somerset to maintain our roads and have suggested that the Unitary Council consult with us when planning future work so that best use can be made of their budget.

During the past year there has been much discussion around road safety and the fact that, as there is no speed restriction in place, the national speed limit applies throughout Loxton and Christon. After much comment on the local WhatsApp sites the topic was raised and debated at the July meeting of the Parish Council. There were arguments for and against the imposition of a speed limit and some very strongly held opinions. The Parish Council resolved to continue to be supportive of attempts to investigate speed and safety issues and encouraged residents to contact North Somerset Council via the Clerk, with their updates and concerns. Residents were reminded that the incidents of dangerous driving should be reported to the Police.

At the September meeting the Clerk produced the form for submission to the Highways authority, however the Councillors deferred a decision on the matter as it was felt more evidence was needed about the strength of feeling more widely in the community.

Taking into account our predicted spending and the need to balance our budget without using reserves which were still being built, it was resolved in January to set the annual precept for the following year at £7,400.00, representing a 5.2% increase.

In March, three residents raised the issue of road safety, once again pressing for a speed limit and also asked if a blocked drain by the garage could be reported as it floods badly and impedes access to the defibrillator. It was felt by Councillors that there was insufficient community support either way for a decision to be made at the meeting. It was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting would be posted on the village What's App group to reach as many residents as possible.

We have continued to keep under review the problem of ash dieback in the Parish Acre. Our tree surgeon carried out a further inspection when healthy trees should be in full leaf and discovered further evidence of the disease causing a number of trees to exhibit distress. His recommendations setting out essential work to keep the area safe were accepted and the work was carried out.

The Councillors have continued to monitor all planning applications submitted to North Somerset Council. There have been a few relating to building work, one relating to a change of use and a couple in respect of tree work. It was resolved to support the change of use application, not to oppose the building work applications and we were contact to leave the tree work to the Teee Officer to decide. One resident was unhappy that her application to fell an oak tree had been refused given that she believed it had honey fungus and was a danger to the adjoining properties. She was advised to email her concerns to the Clerk, who agreed to forward it on to the Tree Officer. It was made clear that we have no power to overrule any planning permission and that to fell the tree without it would be a criminal offence.

The Parish Council felt able to once again provide the church wardens of Christon and Loxton with £100.00 each for the upkeep of their respective churchyards and we repaired the lamppost nearest to the village hall.

The community cafe continues to thrive and building work us well underway on the proposed extension. Councillor Phil Davies is working hard with his fellow trustees to raise the outstanding funds to enable them to provide a true Community Hub of which Loxton and Christon can be justly proud of.

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to the following:

1. Sally Ferguson, our Clerk, for her invaluable guidance.
2. Our Auditor who ensures that we remain financially compliant
3. My fellow councillors , and in particular Sven Bassett who acted as Chairman in my absence.
4. Unitary Councillor Joe Tristram who found the time to attend the majority of our meetings and offer helpful advice and support.
5. Dave Southwood who continues to keep the Loxton bus shelter neat and tidy.
6. Mike Vowles for his hard work as our village orderly and to acknowledge the hard work of Jane Jay, Mary Counsell, the village hall committee, Phil Davies and his team at the Hub and everyone involved in the production and distribution of Contact magazine.

	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
<u>Total income</u>	8171	7297
<u>Expenditure</u>	6266	5113
<u>Staff costs</u>	1929	2390
<u>Balance carried forward</u>	5283	7467

6. Questions- None were forthcoming

9. Close of business- 7.44 pm