

# LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL

<https://www.lopenparishcouncil.gov.uk>

## Minutes of the Meeting of Lopen Parish Council held in the Sunday School Room on Monday 27 July 2026 at 7.00pm

### 26/88 Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs Jones, Feeney, Crane, King and Armstrong; Mrs Larsson (Clerk)  
Apologies: None  
In attendance: Unitary Cllr Steve Ashton; 3 members of the public

### 26/89 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

None.

### 26/90 Parish Councillor Vacancies: No applications received.

### 26/91 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2026

RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record of the previous meeting, which were duly signed by the Chair.

### 26/92 Planning Applications

- a. New Applications: None
- b. Updates and Enforcement: None

Details of applications and the council's full responses are available to view against the respective applications on the Somerset Council planning portal [Link to Planning Portal](#)

### 26/93 Financial Matters

- a. Financial statement: Financial statement with bank reconciliation to 30/6/26 was circulated in advance of the meeting. No queries were raised and the reconciliation was verified by Cllr Feeney.
- b. Payments requiring authorisation

Members RESOLVED to authorise the following payments:

|                                                                    |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Clerk salary & PAYE to 31/8/26 (restricted information under GDPR) |       |
| Admin expenses                                                     | £4.07 |

The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

|                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Unity Trust monthly fees – June '26 | £7.00   |
| Ranger services                     | £480.00 |
| Ranger services                     | £240.00 |

- c. Savings

A breakdown of the council's current financial position was reviewed, covering short-, mid- and long-term fund access requirements. Various accounts available to and suitable for parish councils were reviewed, and it was concluded that Unity Trust offered good interest rates and ease of access and use as the council is already a customer.

RESOLVED to open a new 32-day notice account and new 12-month fixed term account with Unity Trust Bank to invest as follows:

| Category                              | Amount     | Placement                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Current account buffer (c.3 months)   | £2,800.00  | Unity Trust Current Account        |
| Operational funds + 20% buffer        | £7,010.00  | Unity Trust Instant-Access Savings |
| Legal, Development, Election reserves | £7,950.00  | Unity Trust 32-Day Notice          |
| Cyclical reserves (SID + IT)          | £700.00    | Unity Trust 12-Month Fixed         |
| AV Equipment reserve                  | £1,175.00  | Unity Trust 12-Month Fixed         |
| General reserves                      | £6,518.29  | Unity Trust 12-Month Fixed         |
| TOTAL FUNDS                           | £26,155.75 |                                    |

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Members noted that the second precept instalment is due in September. It was RESOLVED that, once received, these funds would be added to the 32-day notice account to maintain sufficient liquidity while preserving the interest-earning potential of the 12-month fixed account.

#### **26/94 Policy Review – Financial Regulations**

Cllrs Feeney and Jones, together with the Clerk, formed the previously agreed working group. The group reviewed the adopted Financial Regulations against the current model document and existing working practices. Proposed amendments, including reinstating clauses from the model document to future-proof the policy were suggested and circulated to members before the meeting for review.

RESOLVED to adopt the updated Financial Regulations as circulated. Updated copy to be circulated and added to the website.

#### **26/95 Orchard Land**

a. Lease

HK Law have contacted SC lawyers requesting the lease with amendments as previously agreed ready for signing. An update is awaited.

Due to a change in contact at HK Law, the clerk was requested to contact them with a reminder of agreed fees for their work on the case.

b. Land clearance

Concerns were raised by properties adjacent to the land regarding risk of fire due to dry and overgrown vegetation. It was RESOLVED that as the parish council is not yet in possession of the land, liability for maintenance and any impact because of its current condition should remain with Somerset Council.

#### **Updates and actions on the following areas:**

- a. Highways: Concern over longevity of repairs to the sink hole on Church Street was raised. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting any issues on the roads, such as potholes or damaged structures, directly to Somerset Council on the following link:  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>
- b. Rights of Way: Comments were received from a landowner regarding suitability of a recent PROW gate replacement, which will be referred to SC Rights of Way (Cllr Feeney)  
Information on rights of way and a tool for reporting issues to Somerset Council can be found at  
<https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>
- c. Flooding: Progress on flood warning signage continues to be made. The parish council are required to review and agree to a memorandum of understanding before the scheme can be finalised. To be revisited at the next meeting.
- d. Local Community Network: The LCN AGM was held on Tuesday 30th June. Duncan Sharkey – was in attendance and took questions.
- e. LCN meetings are open to members of the public – more information can be found here:  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/>
- f. Community Emergency Plan: Plan development is still underway. Agreed to try and arrange an informal working group in early September to progress (Cllr Armstrong/The Clerk)

#### **26/96 Mobile network connectivity**

Members noted concerns raised in relation to inadequate mobile connectivity, particularly with the removal of land lines used for medical alarms. RESOLVED that concerns will be raised with the SRN/MOVA and mobile network operators requested urgent action (Cllr Jones).

#### **26/97 Matters for report only**

Members noted that the deadline for responses to the Local Plan consultation has been extended by a further two weeks to August 9th.

**26/98 Items for the next meeting**

- a. Update on MOU for flood warning signs.

Any additional proposals to be submitted to the Clerk in line with standing orders.

**26/99 Date of next meetings:** Monday 28 September 2026, 7.00pm in the Sunday School Room.

**Exempt Business:** The Parish Council resolved that in view of the confidential/sensitive nature of the business about to be transacted (legal, personal or commercial), the press and public be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**26/100 Clerk DSE Assessment**

The Clerk carried out a self-assessment of their home workstation and identified some areas of concern, including the lack of adjustment and poor position of their chair and wrist pain following longer periods of typing.

RESOLVED for the Clerk to arrange an external assessment to ensure issues are addressed correctly. A number of costs were obtained, with Posturite selected to conduct the assessment at a cost of £175 + vat, which will be split proportionately with other council employers according to working hours.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.32pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

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