



SEAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish **Sue Doble**

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish of Seavington St Mary and St Michael held at Seavington Millennium Hall on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 6.00pm.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllr A Doble, Cllr C Reyland, Cllr N England, Cllr R Prendergast, Cllr B Small, Cllr C Taylor, Cllr C Hughes, Cllr S Ashton, Mrs S Doble (Clerk)

Apologies: Cllr Roundell-Greene, Mr and Mrs Parsons & Ms Stoodley-Dowty

Also Present: There were 20 members of the public present.

2. Question Time

Request for Dogs to be Kept on a Lead Signage

Cllr Small explained that the proposal agreed at the Parish Council meeting in February to install signage requesting that dogs be kept on leads is intended to ensure consideration for all users of the field.

• **Public comments:**

- Concerns were raised regarding the lack of formal consultation, potential impact on the Community Shop, and whether complaints had been formally submitted in writing and validated.
- Reference was made to Public Space Protection Orders at Nine Springs, Yeovil, which included a three-month consultation period.
- The importance of the field for elderly residents and those with reduced mobility to exercise dogs was noted.
- It was highlighted that a dog-free area exists within the fenced section of the field, which is not solely for children's play.
- Questions were raised about the dog-friendly gate at Meade Farm; Cllr England confirmed landowner permission has not been granted. Manor Farm has granted permission, and gates will be fitted in suitable weather.
- Comments were made that rules are followed more readily if perceived as fair and reasonable.
- Suggestions included keeping dogs on leads during considerate times of the day.

• **Councillors Responses:**

- Cllr Small explained that the signage is intended to encourage all users of the field to show consideration and is a voluntary request, not currently enforceable. He noted that if the situation does not improve, wider village consultation may be considered. Cllr Small advised that complaints may be submitted in writing or verbally. Somerset Council has the authority to issue on-the-spot fines as the playing field is an open space. He also noted that people from outside the village are using the field and there are alternative paid fields where dogs can be off lead.
- Cllr England asked if dog walkers felt that they had been required to pick up dog faeces left by others; Members of the public present informed the Parish Council that, as responsible dog owners, they had indeed picked up faeces that did not belong to their own dogs, and noted that most responsible owners do clean up after their pets.
- Cllr Reyland reminded members of the public that in the UK, dogs must be kept on a lead no longer than 2 meters on Open Access land between March 1st and July 31st to protect ground-nesting birds and livestock, as per the Countryside Code, with fines up to £500 for non-compliance.
- Cllr Reyland also noted that dog fouling is often not cleared in farm fields and stated that, as a matter of courtesy, dogs should be kept on leads.

• **Other points raised:**

- Some dog owners show a lack of consideration for other users, including children and families.
- Concern was expressed regarding the potential risks to children from dog fouling and uncontrolled dogs.
- It was noted that many neighbouring villages have implemented a total ban on dogs on playing fields to protect users and maintain cleanliness.
- The issue was described as one of respect, with examples given of aggressive dogs and owners unable to control them.
- Dog fouling occurs throughout the village, not just on the recreation field.

18:22 Two members of the public joined the meeting

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on 18th March 2025

Members **RESOLVED** the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th March 2025 as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Taylor **Seconded** Cllr Reyland

4. Chairman's Remarks (Summary of the Year)

Cllr Doble presented the Chairmans Report:

Over the past year, Seavington Parish Council has remained dedicated to maintaining our village infrastructure, managing public funds responsibly, and navigating environmental challenges.

We have seen several changes to the Council over the past year. In September 2025, we accepted the resignations of Cllr Langley and Cllr Broad, and we thank them for their service. We were pleased to welcome newly co-opted members throughout the year: Cllr Small in September, Cllr Prendergast in October, and Cllr Hughes in February. Additionally, Cllr Reyland was elected as the new Vice Chairman in October.

Recognizing the financial pressures on residents, and in light of Somerset Council's initial proposal to increase its precept by 11%, the Parish Council unanimously agreed to freeze our precept for 2026/2027, resulting in a 0% increase.

Flooding has been a major priority for the Council this year. We successfully hosted a Village Flood Resilience Meeting in October 2025 to discuss issues with external speakers and residents, and we purchased and distributed sandbags to those in need. The Council held detailed discussions with local landowners and FWAG (Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group) to determine liability for stream sections and explore flood mitigation options. We appointed a community Flood Warden to serve as a central point of contact. Unfortunately, Trudy Smith recently resigned from the role in February 2026, and we are currently advertising for a new volunteer to take on this position and help develop a Community Emergency Plan. Throughout all of this, our Ranger has continued to do a fantastic job clearing drains, maintaining road splays, and keeping our village tidy.

We have continued to manage the Seavington Playing Field Association (SPFA) as sole trustees and enhance our local amenities. The Parish Council funded a new dishwasher for the Millennium Hall following a grant application from the SPFA, and we resolved to fund the purchase of a new pair of 16ft x 7ft metal goalposts for the playing field. To improve safety and visibility, we approved quotations to replace the existing car park lights with LED units. These will operate on a timer switch so they are not left on unnecessarily, and the shop has been provided with a switch so they can utilize the lights in the early mornings and evenings. Furthermore, we purchased a salt spreader and salt/grit for the car park outside the Community Shop and Café and the Millennium Hall to ensure health and safety during icy weather.

I would like to extend my thanks to our Clerk, Sue Doble, for her hard work and extra hours over the year, to my fellow Councillors for their continued dedication, and to all the volunteers who keep our community running so well. We look forward to another year of progress and collaboration.

5. Financial Update

The Clerk/RFO presented the following report:

So far, this financial year, the Parish Council's total income amounts to just over £51,000. The majority of this income has been received through the Parish Precept, which totals £47,000. In addition, the Council has received £899.30 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and £402.20 in bank interest.

Total expenditure to date stands at approximately £40,500, with some additional payments for March still to be processed. The Council's largest areas of expenditure continue to be Parish Ranger services and grass cutting. While these represent significant costs, they are considered essential for maintaining the village environment and ensuring the community remains well cared for and attractive.

During the year, the Parish Council also purchased two goal posts for the playing field at a cost of £3,900, and awarded grants totalling just over £4,100. One of these grants supported the installation of replacement heads for the car park lighting. The Council used available CIL funding for this project, as members agreed that improved lighting provides a clear community benefit by increasing safety and security for residents using the village hall and surrounding facilities.

This year the Parish Council has also taken on responsibility for emptying the public bins around the village. The cost of this service to date is £1,226.08, with a further invoice still expected.

Overall, the Council remains in a stable financial position, with sufficient reserves in place to support ongoing services and future projects for the benefit of the village.

6. Village Organisations Reports

Seavington Playing Fields Association and Millennium Hall

Cllr A Doble – Chairman, Seavington Playing Fields Association and Millennium Hall presented the following report:

The Seavington Playing Field Association (SPFA) has enjoyed another vibrant and productive year, building significantly on the foundations and improvements established in the previous term. Our primary focus throughout the last twelve months has been on strengthening our community spirit through an expanded and diverse calendar of social events, while ensuring our facilities remain a premier choice for local gatherings.

The heart of our success this year has been our community engagement program, which featured a series of highly successful social gatherings that brought the village together and provided vital financial support for the Millennium Hall. Building on the popularity of our previous fundraisers, we held several quiz evenings throughout the year. These remain a staple of our efforts, consistently drawing a full house and fostering a healthy sense of local rivalry. We also introduced a Bingo night to our repertoire, which proved to be a popular addition by offering a fun and inclusive evening for residents of all ages.

The undisputed highlight of our social calendar was our recent Italian Evening. The night was a resounding success, defined by a truly impressive standard of catering and entertainment that exceeded all expectations. The atmosphere was exceptional, with the high-quality food and stellar singer creating a memorable experience for everyone in attendance. It was a triumph of coordination that perfectly demonstrated the true potential of our community space.

These events were made possible by the operational updates we have implemented over the last two years. The acquisition of our alcohol license and our new kitchen which continues to receive glowing reviews and has proven to be a robust, invaluable asset for the association.

The success of the past twelve months is a testament to the hard work of the committee and the enthusiasm of the Seavington community. As we look forward, our goal is to maintain this momentum and continue utilizing our modern facilities to host an even broader range of events. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the volunteers, the cleaning staff, and every resident who supported us this year. Your participation is what keeps the Millennium Hall and Playing Fields thriving.

19:03 Three members of public left the meeting.

Community Shop and Cafe

Ian Pamplin - Presented the following report:

Over the past 12 months, the shop and café have continued to make steady progress. A modest increase in turnover over the year has allowed us to keep pace with the rising cost of living and inflation - just about. We are continuing to work hard to maintain this gradual growth so that we can manage ongoing increases in energy costs and the next round of wage rises scheduled for April.

In partnership with the SPFA, we have organised several social events to raise funds for the Millennium Hall, Shop and Café. These have included a race night, two quiz evenings, a Christmas fayre, a bingo evening, and an Italian night. Together, these events have raised just over £2,000, with the Italian night alone contributing £900. The funds raised have been split equally between the Hall and the shop. The shop's share has helped fund the purchase of a new cooker for the café.

In addition to the new cooker, we are currently in the process of ordering decorative acoustic absorbent panels for the café ceiling. These will help reduce background noise and create a more comfortable environment for customers.

I would also like to personally thank my wife Diane, along with Sue and Andy Doble, for their tremendous effort and dedication in helping to make these social events such a success.

The shop and café are still actively looking for volunteers to assist with day-to-day operations. In addition, as of yesterday we have begun advertising for an assistant cook, as Carolyn has recently handed in her notice.

In conclusion, the shop and café remain in a stable position and continue to generate a small profit. This is entirely due to the hard work and commitment of our employees and volunteers, without whom both the shop and café would not be able to continue operating.

The Seavington News

Amanda Jaggars – Editor, The Seavington News presented the following report:

It's been a busy year for the Seavington News - (nearly) All Change within the management committee. Stephen Morris stepped down as Editor after three years, in April 2025. We would like to thank him for all his work during that time. Ray stepped back from the Adverts Manager part of his role at the same time. We were fortunate that Mary Corcoran offered to take this on and is doing a sterling job. Kate and Keith Hunt have joined the Production and Distribution Team, printing 300+ copies each month and in recent months unjamming the printer several times.

Brian Edwards still leads the Distribution Team, who deliver to every home in the village. Shirley Farrington, one of the delivery team, moved away last summer, with her husband. We miss her speed drops and thank her for her help. Before she

left, Shirley recruited Nic Potter to take over her round. Maggie Rawlins has also joined the group to deliver the News along Upton Lane. Thank you to all the team.

At the end of this month, Ray is standing down as treasurer and we thank him for all he has done. Colin Turner will take on this role.

Each month, the News has regular articles from the Gardening Club, Village Shop, a Parishioner, Shepton Beauchamp School, Coastcards from Zoe and Mike as they continue their charity walk of the coastline of mainland Britain, Gardening Notes from Diana Baker and sometimes articles from the Seavington Stroller (aka Rose Budd et al.) We welcome all these contributions, alongside occasional Letters to the Editor, items for the Village Mart and messages of goodbye / obituaries. All contributions are welcome, as long as they are non-political, not unkind and (as agreed by the committee this year) named.

The March edition has finally been published. It is late due to ongoing technical issues with the printer. The committee is currently considering solutions to this.

- Latest account details (8/3/26):
- Community Account £1067.25
- Commercial Instant Access Account £8019.59

During 2025/26, invoices were issued to all advertisers and payment has been received from all but one, whose advertisement the News no longer prints. This was despite the hiatus of several months in the appointment of an advertising manager.

The Seavington Community Land Trust

Jim Pendleton - Seavington Community Land Trust presented the following report:

The current Board have served for the whole year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their support throughout the year and, in particular, our secretary John Schofield and our treasurer Nicola Potter. The whole board are volunteers and we would welcome approaches from anyone who feels they have appropriate skills to join the board. We are keen to ensure that the CLT goes from strength to strength.

The 3 houses at Falcon Close have been let during the past year with one vacant period whilst a new tenant was found. The Lettings have been ably managed by our agent, David Atkin and he gives us regular reports following his inspection visits. I would like to record the boards thanks to David for his very professional and helpful work on our behalf. After the end of our year David confirmed that he will be retiring and we have now appointed a new agent, more details will be included in our annual report for the current year.

The houses have inevitably needed some minor repairs which, again, have been managed by David Atkin. Even relatively new houses still need regular maintenance. The regular electrical and gas safety checks have been carried out to ensure that our statutory duties as landlord have been complied with and any necessary remedial action taken. In particular problems with condensation in one of the houses resulted in extensive work being necessary.

As mentioned earlier one of the houses was unoccupied for part of the year resulting not only in loss of rent but costs associated with utility standing charges etc. In spite of being available at a below market rent we had surprisingly little interest which was disappointing. We have been considering how to advertise vacancies more widely but still in line with our objects.

During the year we have made grants or donations for various items including:

- The Gardening Club has again been supported to fund work on the village Planters.
- A 50% contribution to the new picnic bench near the play park area.
- A major contribution to the village hall.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to respond positively to all grant requests. The board considers all requests in detail and, whilst we cannot always give a positive response, further applications for a grant are always welcome.

Last year I reported on the Renters Reform Bill which is still on its passage through Parliament and we expect it to be enacted later this year to become law in early 2026. As usual with these things we will need to wait and see the final wording but we are not expecting many changes as far as the CLT is concerned.

I also reported last year on the ongoing saga of the frontage of Falcon Close up to New Road. It is a huge disappointment and frustration that this work has not been completed. There was a time earlier in the year when we thought we were moving forward, unfortunately this brief period of optimism came to nothing. We will continue to play our part in attempting to get this work finished and I am pleased to report that our local MP is involved in attempting to get this work completed.

We have also been involved with the private owners in Falcon Close in attempting to rationalise the management of the common areas, I mentioned this in my report last year. We are moving forward on this but, as with the frontage, it is a drawn-out process. Hopefully next year we will be able to report that each of these issues have been resolved!!

We will continue to build our reserves at the same time as considering future requests for grants. We need to bear in mind that future major expenditure for things like boiler replacements is inevitable and as responsible landlords we need to ensure adequate funds are available. Should opportunities arise for further investment in land or property these will be fully investigated by the board. We also need to ensure that we have sufficient reserves to acquire further assets if anything suitable becomes available. This could include additional housing or parcels of land which would be worth owning to ensure that they are available to benefit the community.

Following that report a number of updates are required to bring everyone fully up to date:

John Schofield stood down as secretary in September, he gave us excellent support and on behalf of the board I want to thank him for everything he did.

Fortunately, Sonia Brooks has willingly taken on the secretarial role and I thank her for that.

Ken Dewsbury who had been involved from the first days of the CLT also decided to step down, his wise counsel has been so helpful to the board and I want to thank him for all he has done.

Fortunately, we have recruited two new members who we have co-opted onto the board, I am pleased to welcome Martin Day and Tristan Dunn.

As I mentioned earlier, we have been involved in two areas to do with Falcon Close, firstly the arrangements for a new managing agent and new board members for the Falcon Close Management Company has been achieved, hopefully that will bring some stability. Sadly, the second area has not been as successful, we are still working hard with the private owners to get the frontage onto new road completed. Progress has been very slow but we do now have Adam Dance fighting our corner. Hopefully more positive news next year.

Finally, just to repeat any ideas for the CLT to assist in village amenities will be welcomed and given careful consideration although I cannot guarantee any funding without board approval.

19:15 Two members of the public left meeting.

The Church Wardens of Seavington St Mary and Seavington St Michael

Amanda Jagers - Churchwardens presented the following report:

This week it was announced that Rev Rachel Pengelly has been appointed as rector of the benefice, she has said she is keen to be a regular presence in Seavington.

A service is held weekly in Seavington, covering a variety of worship patterns, we are grateful for the use of Seavington Café for our monthly Café Church services.

Members of the congregation have been working in the garden area, planting up the wooden troughs donated by Kuehne and Nagel. Two cherry trees had to be cut down as they were dying and unsafe, they will be replaced in time; part of the trunk of the one in the garden has been left as an altar and insect home.

James Satterley does excellent work maintaining the churchyards of both St Michael's and St Mary's and his quote for 2026/7 is unchanged. There are a few burial plots in each churchyard at present; when these have been used, the churchyards will be closed and the responsibility for their upkeep passed to the Parish Council.

We are grateful to the retired clergy who lead services during vacancy and Canon Simon Baker, who has been licensed to the benefice.

Both St Michael and St Mary's churches remain open at all times, for all parishioners and visitors. In St Michael's, there are always blankets and facilities for making hot drinks, should anyone need shelter.

St Mary's church (but not churchyard) is owned by the Churches Conservation Trust, supported by local volunteers.

Date of the Next Meeting: 16th March 2027
The Meeting Closed at 19.17