



Congresbury Parish Council

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Chair: Cllr Jane Clarke
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Minutes of the Full Council meeting of **Congresbury Parish Council**, held at the
Old School Rooms, Congresbury on **Monday 14th July 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors Clarke, Hill, Razzell, Burd, Holland, March, Ballard, Daw and Griffiths
In attendance: Nicky Andrews (Clerk) and Cllr Dan Thomas (NS Councillor)

Three Members of the public present:

25044 Public Participation

A resident spoke of her concern, regarding the parking situation in the village. She stated that there was virtually no free parking and that large vehicles were using the spaces in the Riverside car park and some vehicles were parking for the entire day.

Cllr Dan Thomas reported that North Somerset Council would be discussing the issues arising from the Wales and West roadworks. He has spoken to Mendip Vale about the Congresbury surgery. It is too expensive to open as a medical facility but they were happy for it to be used for other activities. The consultation period for the old surgery is being extended. Funding has been obtained for a new rail link from Portishead to Bristol.

25045 Apologies for absence

None

25046 Declarations of Interest and to consider any written applications for dispensations.

None

250247 Approval of minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the Full Council held on Monday 16th June 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

7.35 *Cllr G March joined the meeting.*

25048 Millennium Green – To review proposed actions following Millennium Green Management Group Meeting

The trustees asked if emergency access could be discussed at the next Full Council meeting. The original designer of the Millennium Green Bridge has agreed to help with the maintenance schedule; there is a possibility that it could be done in stages. The information has been received on the PWLB, Clerk and Cllr L Burd to write the business case. Quotes have been requested for the fencing and the plinths, replies have not yet been received regarding the land registry and the access to the paddock.

25049 Clerks Report

A bollard is missing on the junction of the lane to the allotments and Woodhill. I have reported it to North Somerset Council. I have been told that it has been replaced.

Our PSCO has left for pastures new and until he is replaced Congresbury is being covered by other officers. They are unable to attend our Full Council meetings as Monday are their rest day, however they have suggested that they arrange a specific meeting with interested Councillors to go through a list of issues which can be fed back to the public through the Parish Council meetings. Clerk to arrange a meeting with the police.

I have found a quotation for the hedges and trees at King George V Trustees in 2020, which indicates that the hedge between the Tennis Club and Stonewell Drive is owned by the trustees. Clerk to send a copy of the quotation to Cllr L Burd.

7.47 Cllr T Daw joined the meeting.

25050 Co-option

Tim Harris and Jon Whiteman were co-opted onto the Parish Council, and they both signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

25051 To consider any requests to join a committee where there is a vacancy.

It was agreed that Cllr Whiteman would join the Planning Committees.

25052 To discuss residents' comments to our local MP.

Cllr J Clarke had spoken to Tessa Munt MP and she advised us to write to the resident concerned and explain that the police had strongly advised the Council not to return the bench to the Kent Road Green. She suggested that the Parish Council offer an alternative location for the bench. The Chair will write to the resident and explain the situation.

25053 To discuss whether to ask North Somerset Council to set a three-hour time limit on the car park by the ball court.

The Councillors agreed to contact Congresbury Youth Partnership and another other regular user of the car park to ask their opinion on a time limit for the car park.

25054 To consider the following planning application:

a) 25/P/1098/FUL - Land south of Dolemoor Lane Congresbury - Application for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar farm complete with landscaping, associated infrastructure, and temporary construction access.

Resolved – That the Planning committee recommends refusal of this planning application. Congresbury Parish Council wishes to object to this planning application. The proposed solar farm will significantly and adversely impact on the local rural environment and will have a detrimental impact on Congresbury and the surrounding area.

Congresbury is in a beautiful location, an area of outstanding beauty, at the foot of the Mendip Hills.

There are already several solar farms in the area which have affected the scenery. There are already several existing ground mounted solar PV developments in the vicinity of the site (See list below).

13/P/2382/F - Land at Stock/ Iwood Lane, Congresbury.

14/P/2283/F - Land at New Orchard Farm, Puxton Lane, Hewish, Puxton

14/P/1666/FUL (18/P/3540/FUL) - land at Bowerhouse, Banwell.



14/P/1938/F (19/P/2738/FUL) - Wick Lane, W Hewish, Puxton
14/P/1319/F - Land SW of Carditch Drove, Congresbury.
14/P/1842/F - Land at Towerhead Farm, Banwell.
20/P/0620/FUL - Bowerhouse, Havage Drove, Puxton.
22/P/1450/FUL - Yanel Farm, Churchill
23/P/2159/FUL - Land at Brinsea Green Farm Brinsea Lane Congresbury
25/P/0809/FUL - Land to The West and East of The Strawberry Line
Brinsea Road Congresbury (Not Approved)

This site together with the other local solar farms; the whole area will become one super solar farm. There is no need for more solar farms in this area, there are plenty of solar panels already installed and grouping them together in one area seems undesirable and will have a detrimental effect on wildlife.

North Somerset Council will need to ensure they consider, in conjunction with this application, the potential impact on the local environment, including cumulative landscape impacts with the other solar farms in the area. Residents have voiced concerns about the noise and light pollution from the "ancillary structures." Local communities have chosen to live in a quiet, peaceful environment, where they and their families can enjoy nature. Allowing another solar farm to go ahead will just be a gateway to other landowners following suit. What will be the limits on future development if one of the existing "solar farms" wishes to expand to adjacent fields.

In an area already prone to flooding, solar panels will make the land more predisposed to flooding, as water may not be able to soak into the fields. Will water be channelled into the rhynes and streams, this could lead to a massive and dangerous impact on property. Fields that are waterlogged even with natural drainage; artificial structures could only make this worse.

Solar energy is valuable, but a solar farm is not an efficient use of land. They should be installed in the right place on industrial sites(brownfields) and residential homes (rooftop revolution) rather than covering large swaths of our countryside. Putting solar panels on rooftops across the country can help us to generate clean electricity whilst cutting our carbon emissions and sparing land for food, farming and nature. Local planning policies should clearly set apart land that is suitable for producing decent quality crops, from inadequate quality fields that could be used for solar farms. We need our best land to be productive. The amount of arable land in the UK is in decline and we cannot afford to lose further parcels of arable land.

The erection of the Solar farm and its associated maintenance and infrastructure represents severe habitat destruction, soil degradation and destroying the beauty of nature. Transitory animals have their traditional routes blocked and deer are often diverted onto roads. Bird and bat deaths are common as they mistake the glass for water. Although the plans claim they will be inclusive of wildlife; the sheer size of this development will wipe out a vast number of animal homes and natural infrastructure. Deer, hares, foxes, bats and other animals will be forced to find new habitats when the surrounding countryside has been destroyed. The area currently supports a multitude of species which need to be protected. The impact of the Solar Farm will be catastrophic given the changes to the environment with a huge structure.

The land will have little potential for biodiversity as half of it will be in permanent shadow and

rainwater run-off creates set channels without proper dispersal. Topsoil is removed and cleaning materials can contaminate the soil. Boundaries are defined by security fencing and intrusive CCTV. The land in warmer months under the panels often looks dry and dying. The main roads leading to and from the planned solar farm are already heavily congested with vehicle traffic and every route is already overburdened and often backed up. The increased traffic would not only deteriorate road conditions but could put emergency support services at risk, potentially leading to severe consequences.

25055 To review the Welcome Week.

Cllr K Hill thanked the Councillors for their help and stated that there had been mixed feedback to the Welcome Week. The stall at the fete had been a success, the methodist hall were delighted with the outcome and the volunteers used the event to network with other groups. The luncheon for the volunteers (funded by VANS) was enjoyed by everyone.

8.20 Cllr D Thomas and one member of the public left the meeting.

25056 To authorise payment schedule for July 2025

Resolved: To authorise payments for July 2025.

25057 Finances

For members to note the finances for month 3 (June 2025) Clerk and Chair/Vice Chair to sign and initial pages.

Direct debits, credit card and bank transfer payments as detailed totalling £39617.44 (June 2025)

- a. Bank reconciliations
- b. Payments & Receipts
- c. Expenditure against budget

25058 Exclusion of Press and Public

Recommended – that pursuant to the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business by reason of the confidential nature of business to be transacted – to consider commercial matters.

25059 Fallen Tree at Riverside Gardens

To note charge to clear fallen tree and take all waste away and discuss cost to take down the remaining part of tree, chip up branches and take away all waste.

Resolved – The charge to clear the fallen tree was noted and it was agreed to take down the remaining part of the tree as per the quotation – Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Griffiths seconded, all Cllrs agreed.

25060 Drop down bollards at Riverside Gardens.

To note charge to repair bollards to allow fields behind the Millennium Green to be mowed and to discuss the cost of an annual service for bollards.

Resolved – The charge to repair the bollard was noted and it was agreed to cover 50% of the cost with North Somerset Council paying the other 50% – Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Griffiths seconded, all Cllrs agreed.

Resolved – It was agreed to service the bollards annually – Cllr Holland proposed, Cllr Clarke seconded, all Cllrs agreed.

25061 To discuss clearing the vegetation from around the ball court.

It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain a further quotation from our current ground's maintenance contractor.

25062 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 11th August 2025 at 7.30pm

Meeting ended 08.40pm.

Signed



Date

