



Congresbury Parish Council

Orchard House
The Old School Rooms
Station Road
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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish meeting was held on Thursday 1st May 2025 at 7.00pm in the Old School Rooms, Station Road, Congresbury.

MINUTES

1. Welcome and introductions.

Cllr Jane Clarke, Chair of the Parish Council opened the meeting and welcomed the twenty-five people including fifteen residents of the Parish of Congresbury and District Councillor Dan Thomas. Cllr Clarke introduced herself as the Chair of the Parish Council and asked each member of the Council and Staff to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr E Burd and T Daw sent their apologies.

3. Minutes of the Parish Meeting of 9th May 2024

The minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2024, were approved by the meeting as a true record and signed by Cllr J Clarke.

4. Chairman's Annual Report – Cllr Jane Clarke

Cllr Clarke thanked Councillor Cove who had left the Council in 2024/2025 for his valuable contribution.

Despite the efforts of Cllr D Thomas (NSC), CRAG, Congresbury Parish Council and the residents of Congresbury the appeal against the Mulberry Road development was lost.

In April 2024, the Parish Council were informed that the lease to rent eight spaces in the Congresbury Arms car park would not be renewed. Although there is still the right of way on foot to the Millennium bridge and vehicles are allowed to cross the car park to go to the paddock for maintenance works.

The Parish Council have not been about to arrange a meeting with the owners of the precinct car park owners to discuss the parking charges and the amount of free parking time.

There is a requirement for a new Parish Council burial ground as the current one will only be able to allow cremations, due to the water table, within the next five to ten years. If anyone knows of an under used paddock that could be used, please contact the Parish Clerk.

The Old School Rooms has been fitted with new windows and the library has had a new kitchen fitted. The Ball Court and the Football Club leases have been renewed for twenty-one and twenty-five years, respectively.

The Parish Council would like to thank Darren Gardiner for repairing the fascia boards on the front of The Old School Rooms without charge.

The Welcome week will take place between the 21st and 28th June 2025, its purpose is to encourage new volunteers to join clubs and societies and to help new villagers get to know their neighbours and what is going on in the village.

The Summer Fete is on June 21st and is being opened by Tessa Munt. We hope that some clubs and societies will open their doors and welcome visitors on that morning from 11am – 1pm. During the following week, the aim is for villagers to have informal coffee mornings, or barbecues and invite their neighbours to join in.

On Saturday June 28th, the Old School Rooms will be open and there will be the opportunity to meet Parish Councillors plus the people running the regular activities. The Old School Rooms will also provide a hub for those clubs and societies that do not have their own premises and want to advertise. We hope that all the main venues – the Memorial Hall, Methodist Hall, Rec Club, Scout Hut, Tennis Club, Football Club, Youth Club, Community Café, Church and Refectory- will open from 11am -1pm on this Saturday.

Cllr Clarke closed her annual report with a request for new Councillors, the Clerk confirmed that a resident had requested information about becoming a Councillor this afternoon.

5. Question and Answer Session

Residents raised concerns over the parking situation in Congresbury. The recent charges at the precinct are causing people to park on the Stonewell Estate especially Stonewell Lane as the double yellow lines have faded or go to Yatton where the parking is still free. The shops are losing business, as workers are not stopping and the bakers has been put up for sale.

It is a comparable situation with the car park at the Congresbury Arms; charges will have a major impact on the Methodist and Memorial halls who have no or little parking of their own. Cars could start parking on the High Street B3133 as there are no parking restrictions causing chaos on an already busy road. It will be difficult to stop for a prescription. Broad Street parking is always full and people are parking on the double yellow lines and further down in Pauls Causeway. No decision had been made on the signage, camera and lights for the Congresbury Arms car park when the Clerk checked for Monday's planning meeting. One resident had heard that the car park could be used for airport parking which would be legal if they stayed in the Congresbury Arms.

The residents asked if Cllr Dan Thomas (North Somerset Councillor) could ask if the two planning applications could be taken to be discussed at the next P & R committee meeting. Cllr Dan Thomas will speak to the case officer. Cllr Dan Thomas confirmed that the double yellow lines in Stonewell Lane will be refreshed in the next couple of weeks.

Tincknells are apologetic about the charge but it has been set at the lowest amount, one resident did remind everyone that it was only 50p for an hour.

In the last few weeks there have been two consultations for new solar farms in Congresbury. Oldbridge Solar Farm and Strawberry Solar Farm (25/P/0809/FUL). The latter will be discussed at the planning meeting on the 19th May 2025, the former application is imminent (and will be discussed as soon as it is available.)

The residents made several comments on the fact the solar farms will destroy the countryside and should be compulsory on new houses. It will have a negative impact on the Strawberry Line as it will be on both sides. The Clerk explained that the regulations for solar farms were changing at the end of May 2025 which is the reason for the urgency. Comments for the Strawberry Solar Farm need to be made online or sent to North Somerset Council by Thursday 29th May 2025.

Several residents asked about the Environment Agency work on the Millennium Green and when the fencing would be taken down so that the footpath could be used again. It was explained that they had been waiting for drier weather to be able to complete remedial works and sow new grass seed. The Clerk explained that the fencing would be removed once the bank had stabilised. The process was taking longer because the fence was ignored and people were climbing over it.

A resident asked if the Parish Council had received a donation from the environment agency. The Clerk replied that the Parish Council had received £1500 from the environment agency for environmental enhancements.

A resident confirmed she had seen a press release today about the BSIP scheme at the Smallway junction, confirming that it has been approved. She expressed her concern as it will cut off elderly residents from Sheppy's Mill. By blocking off the entrance to the A370 and making the residents come and go via Kent Road, parked cars make this difficult and dangerous (yellow lines maybe required) and removing the footpath to the bus stop. The residents will be forced to walk further to get to the shops and bus stop. She would like to see a face-to-face meeting with the residents of Sheppy's Mill before the work commences.

An engagement survey has begun to discuss the future of Congresbury Surgery with the idea of turning into a community hub. Surveys can be completed online or paper copies can be picked up from the Parish Office.

Additional Housing Sites Consultation – residents are concerned over the possible extra housing in Congresbury. Cllr Dan Thomas confirmed that YACWAG shared our concerns over sites at Cobthorn, Woodhill, Rhodyate and Kingswood, stating that they should not be developed.

The consultation aims to identify where additional development may be possible and not all sites would be suitable.

A resident asked about the amount of CIL monies that had been received from planning applications and how had the money been spent. The RFO explained that CIL reports for the last two years were on the website and that we had not spent much money as the amounts received were only a few thousand pounds and we needed to accumulate a pot of money to be able to look at projects to fund. Although less restricted than the previous system S106 there are still rules to follow and we have five years from the date received to spend each amount. The resident suggested that we ask the community for ideas.

A resident asked about recent rise in office staff salaries compared to the precept. The Clerk stated that the matter would be considered at the next Full Council agenda on Monday 12th May 2025.

Cllr Dan Thomas thanked the Councillors and the office staff for the hard work in the last year. As it has been a busy year including the Mulberry Road appeal, 20mph consultation, BSIP, Solar Farms planning applications, Environment Agency and gas works and many other things.

Cllr Clarke thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed: Date: