

Minutes of the Meeting of Brewham Parish Council held at Brewham Village Hall on Tuesday, 6th January 2026

Present: Richard Hiscock (Chair), Nick Mann, Mark Perry & Patricia Stainton.

In attendance: Sue Price (Clerk), Councillor Lucy Trimnell and two members of the public.

In Robert Jackson's absence Richard Hiscock took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence:**
Apologies for absence had been received from Robert Jackson and Councillor Tom Power.
2. **Declarations of Interest:**
There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th November 2025:**
The minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2025 were unanimously approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters Arising:**
There were no matters arising that would not be dealt with elsewhere.
5. **Financial Business:**
 - i. **Financial transactions:**
Since the last meeting, no income had been received and the payments approved at that meeting had been made. These included two payments to Zonkey for setting up the new website, the annual fee to the Office of the Information Commissioner, a donation to the Parochial Church Council towards the cost of rewiring the Church and the Royal British Legion for the two Remembrance Day wreaths. There were also bank charges for September/October.

The financial transactions for the period 12th November 2025-5th January 2026 were as follows:

Bank balances brought forward on 5 th January 2026	£14,603.17
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Expenditure:

Office of the Information Commissioner – data protection annual fee	52.00
Lloyds Bank – service charges September-October	5.25
Parochial Church Council of South Brewham – donation to the rewiring fund	350.00
Zonkey – payment for the cost of setting up the new website and annual fees	453.00
Royal British Legion – two Remembrance Day wreaths	40.00

The Fund balances on 5th January 2026 were therefore:

General Fund	£3,151.40
Burial Ground Fund	151.52
Burial Ground Wall Repair Fund	8,400.00
Reserve Fund	2,000.00

Represented by Bank a/cs:

National Savings Bank Investment a/c	£859.03
Lloyds Bank Community a/c	4,443.89
Hinckley & Rugby Building Society 90 Day Account	8,400.00

Debtors

Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance – donation towards defibrillator training	50.00
Zonkey – final payment for setting up and hosting new website	531.00

Bank balances to include debtors	£13,121.92
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Bank balances carried forward on 6 th January 2026	£13,702.92
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There were no invoices to be approved for payment.

ii. Budget & Precept for the financial year 2026/2027:

The Clerk had circulated a draft budget statement and estimates. She explained that for the current year the precept had been set at £4,900.

The Reserve Fund:

The Reserve Fund started the current year with a balance of £1,500 and when the current year's precept was set it had been agreed to add £500 to this Fund to cover future costs that might arise from cutbacks being made by Somerset County Council and larger expenses such as the printing of Below The Tower in 2026. The Fund has a balance of £2,000 at the time of the January 2026 meeting and this is expected to be the balance at year-end.

It was unanimously agreed that it would not be necessary to add any money from the precept to the Reserve Fund in the year 2026/2027.

The Burial Ground Fund:

The Burial Ground Fund started the current year with a balance of £384.43 and £1,400 of the precept was allocated to this Fund. To date, and for the first time for a number of years, no further income has been received.

This year the expenditure for mowing and maintaining the Burial Ground was £1,500 and water rates were £132.91.

The balance in the Burial Ground Fund at the time of the January 2026 meeting is £151.52 and unless there is any further income or expenditure this will be the figure at year-end.

Assuming that the cost of mowing and maintaining the Burial Ground remains at £1,500, the Clerk suggested that the sum allocated to this Fund from the precept should be increased to £1,750 and that if there were any additional unbudgeted costs these could be paid from either the General or the Reserve Fund. **It was unanimously agreed** that the precept for the Burial Ground Fund should be set at £1,750 for the financial year 2026/2027.

Burial Ground Wall Repair Fund

The money in the Burial Ground Wall Fund is ring fenced to pay for any future maintenance work. At the beginning of the year the balance in the Fund was £8,400 and so far no money had needed to be spent so at the time of the January 2026 meeting the balance remains at £8,400 and it is envisaged that this will be the figure in the Fund at year-end.

The money held in the Burial Ground Wall Repair Fund was transferred to the Hinckley & Rugby Building Society in August 2025 and the interest on this account is paid annually so will be paid in the 2026/2027 financial year.

The General Fund:

Expenditure for everything else comes from the General Fund which started the year with a balance of £1,878.41 and £3,000 of the precept was allocated to this Fund. The only other income expected during the year is the small amount of savings account interest and the Clerk will be able to reclaim VAT of £164 on the Zonkey invoices.

RL J

Current confirmed expenditure for the year is £3,323, which includes the Clerk's salary to be paid in March and further bank charges. At the time of the January 2026 meeting the balance in the General Fund is £2,570.40, which includes the two uncashed cheques paid to the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance and Zonkey.

If there is no further income or expenditure then the balance in the General Fund at year-end will be approximately £1,720 and so a precept of £3,150, plus any agreed increase, should be sufficient to cover the expenses for the year 2026/2027 and if not then there is money that can be taken from the Reserve Fund.

It was unanimously agreed that the precept for the General Fund should be set at £3,150 for the financial year 2026/2027 and, following agreement to increase the precept to £5,100, this figure will now be £3,350.

If there is no further unforeseen income or expenditure between now and year-end then the total held in the four Funds/bank accounts will therefore be about £12,275.

The effect of the proposed budget for the year 2026/2027 would be a net expenditure of £5,135 (as per the attached sheet).

At the January 2025 meeting it was agreed that it would be prudent to consider increasing the precept each year by a small amount to try and avoid any sudden large increases in future years. It was noted that if the precept was increased by £200 this would equate to an increase for a residence on Band D paying an additional 73p. **It was unanimously agreed** that the precept for the year 2026/2027 should be raised by £200 to £5,100, this being £1,750 for the Burial Ground Fund and £3,350 for the General Fund.

It was unanimously agreed that the Chairman should sign the Precept Notification Form for 2026/2027 requesting that the precept be set at £5,100.

6. Planning Applications:

i. Decisions on applications already considered by the Parish Council:

- a. 25/01526/FUL – Land at Picketts Farm, Bedlam Green Farm Lane, Brewham, BA10 0LP – construction of an agricultural building to be used for storing farmyard manure to reduce fouled surface run off. Decision awaited.
- b. 25/01770/LBC – Hardway House, Hardway, BA10 0LR – internal alterations. No comments or objections. Application approved.

ii. Application received since the last meeting and discussed by email:

- a. 5/02911/S73 - Hillcombe Farm, Kingsettle Hill, Brewham, BA10 0LB - S73 application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) for revised design to reduce the dwelling size, in relation to planning approval 25/00181/FUL for erection of a dwelling, as an alternative design and siting for consented and commenced replacement dwelling 20/01836/FUL. Councillors had no comments or objections.

iii) Appeal received since the last meeting and for discussion:

- a. Planning Appeal – 25/006ff/FUL – Forest Barn, North Brewham, BA10 0JR – demolition of existing building and erection of a self-build dwelling to provide a sustainable live/work environment. In July last year Councillors had supported the original application but the Planning Department said they never received the email advising them of this. The reasons the original application was turned down were discussed in detail. Lucy Trimnell advised that she had spoken to Mr Caines but that she had not been asked for her opinion. It was unanimously agreed that Councillors hoped that the appeal would be successful and the application be allowed to go ahead. It was agreed that Patricia Stainton would draft a note setting out why Councillors wished to support the appeal and that this would be circulated to the other members for their comments and once all had been received the Clerk would submit the final document to the Planning Inspectorate.

iii) **Any new applications received:**

No new applications had been received.

7. **Burial Ground, Churchyard, Common Land and Village Amenities:**

At the November meeting David Dabinett had said that he would be happy to continue mowing the Common Land for the 2026 season and it was agreed that the Clerk would write confirming this and also contact Nigel Payne asking him if he would be happy to continue to do the mowing and maintenance of the Burial Ground for which he would be paid £1,500 in three instalments.

8. **Roads:**

a. **Outstanding matters:**

The Highways Department continually mark and mend potholes in the parish but they are an ongoing problem with new ones appearing, especially after heavy rain and freezing weather.

b. **New matters:**

There is a large pothole by the entrance to Hardway House, others on Strap Lane going towards Upton Noble and at the crossroads at Border which have been reported. The Clerk had noted that the road near Bedlamgreen Farm has seriously subsided. Richard Hiscock advised that there had previously been a meeting with the Highways Department when Cameron Mackintosh had offered to carry out repairs but had been told he could not do this. The Clerk will report the matter to the Highways Department as well as potholes in Street Lane where the bridge is also looking dangerous and other problems with blocked drains, further potholes and missing white lines in the parish.

Mark Perry said that he had received complaints about a high voltage cable that was hanging down in the hedge on Hardway near Springfield Farm (this was thought to be a BT cable), a water leak on the Bruton Road almost opposite the reservoir gateway and sewage that appears to be being discharged into the water course at Osip. Mark Perry agreed that he would speak to the owner about this.

9. **Footpaths & Bridleways:**

Outstanding matters:

There has been no progress on any of the outstanding repairs. Lucy Trimnell suggested that the Clerk might contact the Senior Rights of Way Officer, Rachel Pearce. The Clerk will write to her about the outstanding matters and ask her to advise whether the responsibility for carrying out repairs lies with Somerset Council or individuals over whose land footpaths run.

10. **Report from County Councillors:**

Councillor Tom Power had circulated his report for January.

Lucy Trimnell noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's report on boundary changes in Somerset was due to be published in December but has now been delayed until March 2026.

Some Council meetings have been cancelled leading to delays, including the budget setting. This will be finalised in February and will likely lead to council tax rises, further cutbacks and Town and Parish Councils are likely to have to contribute more towards the cost of future elections.

A new Director of Adult Social Services has been appointed and the results of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection are still awaited.

It was noted that rubbish often falls from or blows out of the recycling collection lorries.

Councillors thanked Lucy Trimnell and Tom Power for all the work they do in the area and for their willingness to help and support as and when asked.

11. **Dates of future meetings:**

The final meeting of the financial year will be held on Tuesday, 10th March 2026.

Meetings for 2026/27 will be held on Tuesdays 12th May, 14th July, 8th September & 10th November 2026 & 12th January & 9th March 2027.

12. **Open Forum:**

There were no questions or comments.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.12pm.

Signed.....*A L Jackson*..... Date...10th March 2026.....