

Porlock Parish Council – Portfolio Report – July 2025

(Ongoing unresolved items from previous reports have been left in)

OSC Car Park

Waste Bins at the OSC – These are repeatedly being filled to capacity overnight which is causing a waste capacity issue for the council's bins. On one occasion the general waste bin was filled with food waste which resulted in an infestation of maggots. Currently the OSC has three public waste bins on the grounds, as use of the site has reduced due to the relocation of the information centre the number of bins will be reduced to limit their over filling and the new contract waste bin will be fitted with a lock.

Recycling shed – the OSC recycling shed has been fitted with locks following a period of high jinks where someone was taking it upon themselves to empty the shed of its contents around the carpark.

Access – a couple of drivers have taken it upon themselves to block the gates to the OSC in the evening which has prevented the caretaker securing the site. The gates will now be secured once the site has closed for the day and no other known activities are planned.

High Bank Car Park

Parking outside of bays – Recent complaints have been received from some permit holders about other permit holders not keeping to the marked bays. Those concerned have been politely asked to keep their vehicles within their bays.

Permit unauthorised use - It has been recently identified that one of the spaces is being used as a holiday let parking with an old permit. The space is not currently let. The previous permit holder has been informed that the permit was not renewed in April and that use for this purpose is against the permit terms and conditions of use and that a permit will not be issued and unauthorised parking notices will be issued advising of alternative parking options. The holiday let has been asked to destroy the permit and remove the information from its information portfolio.

Swiss lodge water pipe

Water pipe replacement – Works have been carried out successfully and the road/path has been satisfactorily reinstated.

Picnic Area

Broken main branch - has been reported to Somerset Council the picnic area has been closed off until this has been rectified.

The Meadows

Red line markings have appeared in several places in the Meadows which is causing alarm that work is about to take place. No orders have been received council staff have made enquiries with the utility companies. Nothing is showing on the one network system

Neglected shrub – The shrub at the entrance to the Meadows has been removed for now it has been replaced with soil and grass seed and is being watered by a resident.

Bench Request – A request to instal a bench at the Meadows is on the July agenda for council to consider.

Road signs & highways

Porlock hill – A request to clean the signs on Porlock hill was closed by Somerset council and marked complete. This has now been reopened.

Mobile Speed Indicator Device – Further assessment has taken place to identify the most appropriate places to position an MSID following Somerset Highways licence requirements. An update will be given to council during the July meeting.

Pavement deterioration – a recent reported fall outside Holmdale on the high street, which resulted in a broken wrist has been reported to Somerset Council.

Website & IT infrastructure

Website Management - Next steps will be to plan what the build of the new improved website (Visual and Functionality) and how to make the move as seamless as possible for all.

RICOH printer – has now been installed and set up in the Parish Office.

Porlock Parish Council Logo (No further update)

Redesign – Pending final amendments. Following engagement with the Collage of Arms as to the origins of the logo as requested by Council they have advised as they can find no record of any registration of the logo that “Council may perhaps be well-advised to cease using its current logo, given the appearance of an heraldic device”. Clarification has been sought from them if this is required or recommendation no response has been received.

Doverhay Toilets (No further update)

Toilet Reinstatement – Electrical issues remain unresolved, The original schematics are sourced to see if this provides an additional input to getting the electrical problems that supply power to the services resolved. Racking has been purchased and is in place for storing cleaning materials, a COSH assessment and notice will be put in place.

Emergency Call Alarms – Works to install the call alarms remains outstanding. Waiting date.

St Dubricius Churchyard

Bench – A broken bench has been made safe awaiting repairs.

Unsafe Memorial Works – Work has been put on hold by request of the church until approval to proceed has been granted.

Additional Works – Advice and quotes are being obtained and will be presented to Council for consideration once received. Work should be completed by the autumn 2025.

- Footpath at the rear which ENPA have advised the only option is to raise the path to avoid damage to the roots of the yew tree. Quote has been received this will be presented to Council once all quotes have been received.
- Masonry wall to the south. Cavities in between stones is showing a loss of mortar. This whole wall could undergo a consolidation.
- Post finial has now been repaired and the bill settled
- Coping to the west of the gate piers to the north path need consolidation.
- Church cross on the churchyard will require minor masonry maintenance every other year.

War Memorial (no update)

The new maintenance contract has been set up. The next scheduled visit will take place in October.

Hawkcombe Cemetery

Cemetery Site Assessment – Work is underway to progress the actions following the meeting of the council in March. Due to OSC refurbishment work an update will be provided to Council in September. Temporary signage is being put in place on the steps.

Unsafe Memorials – Following the meeting an updated quote has been received and a reduction of Circa £18k has been obtained. Council will be asked to consider this in September along with other works.

Memorial Benches

Kingdon – Invoice for installation has been received and payment from the Kingdon family has been requested. A payment for the same amount of money has been received but not by Kingdon family - remains under investigation.

Other Benches – Following the recommendations to council in March any decaying benches beyond repair will be removed. Works to be carried out.

Hawkcombe Playground

Signage – Signage has been replaced.

Fence & Gate – After inspection work was approved to fix the several fence posts and the gate to make secure and prevent further damage or cost £180.00. Works to be carried out waiting date.

Grounds Maintenance

The grounds maintenance contractor and his team have worked hard to reinstate the ground contract throughout the village. A review of the works undertaken by the contractor in the village will be conducted with the contractor and the clerk and reported to council in September.

Coach Road Gate – The gate has been temporarily fix (not by Council). Once the adjoining fence has been repair (not council's responsibility) then the gate will be replaced..

Tree Survey – Currently sourcing a new contractor to provide a quote to carry out council's tree survey. Current survey quote £1500, sourcing alternative competitive quotes.

Old School Centre (Right hand side) – Stone wall needs reviewing. A contractor will be requested to come and assess the wall.

OSC Orchard – The outside tap and post have been replaced.

Porlock Marsh War Memorial (no update)

Old School Centre (Building)

Refurbishment - The works have gone according to plan and have been completed on time. Remaining outstanding items listed below. The Porlock Community Maintenance Team have agreed to come take a look at 'sprucing up' the areas with a lick of paint as a temporary measure. Full decoration of the whole site will be required in future once all works have been completed. The Lovelace Resource Centre has successfully relocated to the shared space within the library extension. A review of how to make best use the space in the Parish room as the dedicated Parish Council office will take place over the coming weeks.

Business Risks

Roof slate – recent high winds caused a roof slate to become dislodged, a repair was carried out by a local builder. A visual check showed no further areas of concern.

Alarm System – New control panels to be connected up (office and community room)

Fire Risk Assessment – Once all works have been completed a reassessment will be arranged.

Electrical Inspection – A full report will be provided for council's records.

Outside tap – Locks have been purchased for the outside taps to prevent taps being used / left on.

Emergency Lighting - Survey has been carried out, waiting details of the report.

Waste – Sanitary and General waste contracts have now been set up and commence in July.

Flagpole – A replacement flag pole has been ordered. Once delivered a date will be set to install.

Outside lights, fairy Lights & Socket fault – All works now completed with an wired timer.

Staff Toilet – Loose basin has bene fixed by PPC's plumber.

Water bottle refill unit – Request to Wessex water for approval is outstanding, this is being followed up. Waiting signage for the unit.

Overhead Heaters – Two overhead heaters have been reinstalled in the Community Room and the Parish Office.

Water heater – The water heater for the kitchen is due to be installed in July.

Internal Wall damage – Damp damage has been identified in the Parish office in the far corner. Investigations indicate that that this is most likely due to historic water ingress. The PPC caretaker has removed all crumbling

plaster and rotten skirting and will treat and further assessment will be carried out to see if the problem has been resolved.

Car Park at the Village Hall

A review of current arrangements will take place by the PME estate early July when it will be decided how it wishes to proceed.

Idverde bins

Street cleaner – Recruitment remains ongoing a new advert has been put up in local shops, the PPC website and Facebook

Street Furniture, displays & equipment

Floral Displays – Both contractors have agreed to the new extended schedule.

Notice boards at OSC – A site survey has been carried out by Active Signs on the 9th April. Still waiting feedback and quotes to present to Council, costs have been budgeted as part of the OSC project works.

Noticeboard at Central Garage – Following a review by the Porlock Community Maintenance Team it has been determined that these boards are a) beyond economical repair and b) access to see what information is on them is now restricted by the cars on the forecourt making it nearly impossible to access. The PCMT are currently looking into alternative notice board system for the church railings where current users could use these new boards. An item to consider what happens to these boards will be put to Council in September.

Noticeboard outside hardware store - like for like replacement to be sought.

Benches – General – Refurbishment on the first bench is underway.

Bench at the Meadows – Somerset Council's Road Records have responded favourably, we have now supplied them with bench specifications for their approval. Once permission is granted Council will then be required to approved spend for purchase, installation and up keep.

Defibrillators – (No update)

Emergency plan – Next meeting date to be set. Current working timeline Q2 to gather and concise information prepare and first draft documents, Q3 produce draft final proposal, circulate, seek feedback and any required approvals, Q4 Launch.

River Monitors - Porlock Parish Council has been approached to have flood river monitors fitted. Alistair Campbell has been put in touch with the team leading the work to get further information and arrange installation.

Somerset Rivers Authority Grant Fund – Clerk is working with Somerset Prepared on an application for funding through their own grant scheme.

Pollards Court No Turning Bay – Both signs have now been put in place.

Central Car Park Overnight Sleeping Camping – Two additional signs have been put in place.

Finger Post at Villes Lane – The loose finger post has been reported to ENPA and they are looking to wall mount the post to prevent it coming loose again. (No update)

Elections

Future dates to be planned. Somerset Elections to advise when their next election will take place.

Porlock Community Library – written by Mary Perkins

New Look Library is now open again. The work has transformed the space. A huge thank you to the Parish Clerk for putting the grant application and everything else together, the Parish Council for approving the alterations and the library volunteers who dismantled and then re-assembled the library.

Summer Reading Challenge has been promoted at St Dubricius, Oaks Nursery and Little Fishes Nursery. At least one craft morning is planned per week during the school summer holidays. There is also a visit from children's author, B Ware, who will run a craft morning - "Caution, may contain dragons!"

Library Collaborations: the library has hosted two drop in sessions with the Pine Marten Bounce Back Project. West Somerset Wildways and the library are joining forces on 6th August for a Bug Hunt and all things nature in the Old School Centre and Orchard.

Doverhay Manor Committee – written by Duncan McCanlis

The Doverhy Manor Committee (DMC) AGM was held on 25th July in the Village Hall.

The proposed merger between this committee and the Museum was discussed. The meeting felt that this matter needed to be settled as soon as possible.

The Maintenance team updated the group on completed and outstanding issues.

The insurance premium has risen significantly (after a re-evaluation of rebuild costs organised by PPC) to over £3,000. This and ongoing matters would mean that the charity would use all of its financial reserves in four to five years. To correct this, it was decided to increase rents as follows:

- Museum – raise rent by 20% each year for five years
- Snooker Club – double the rent with immediate effect and review next year.

NOTE – As DMC are a charity, we are under a duty to rent out premises at a commercial rate, unless the tenant has similar objectives.

The issue of the donations box in the Museum was discussed. It is not made clear to possible donors that the money goes entirely to the Museum and not to DMC.

It was noted that both the Museum and the Snooker Club do not have up to date Leases.

These three matters: Leases, possible merger and donations, are to be discussed with the Museum.

It was reported that PPC do not hold a large amount in an EMR; this will be added to on an annual basis to build up a sinking fund for the building.

There were no changes to the officers. The position of Secretary remains vacant, but Kim Rowe has offered to continue taking the minutes and sending out meeting agendas.

Doverhy Manor Museum

In 2023, the PPC kindly gave the museum a grant of £700, to help develop a new website. Time has been taken developing the site, concerned to deliver a product did justice both to the museum and to the village. The museum were especially keen to present a flavour of Porlock's rich history, to inform our own community but, of course, also to try to attract more visitors and business to the village. .

The museum have launched their new website - <https://doverhymanormuseum.org.uk>

One important feature is the Museum Monthly, where we will regularly publish a fresh piece of research to encourage users to come back to the site on a frequent basis.

All feedback is welcome to enable us to further improve the site.

Future progress on developing our plans for the wider refreshment of the museum, is going well having held meetings both with the museum designer, Henry Lyndsay and a Heritage Lottery consultant. a more detailed progress report will be provided early in the autumn.

Porlock Village Hall

Flooding - A report following the recent flooding is on the Jul agenda for to consider any further action. The Porlock Village Hall Management Committee met on the 23rd June. Report from the council's representative to follow.

Local Community Network – No update

Late Night Shopping Working Group – Written by Duncan McCanlis

A meeting was held a meeting with the one trader who offered to be involved. Have drawn up a rough plan, will pursue immediate items and report to the traders in due course.

Events and Festival Working Group - No report

The Old School Centre Community Garden Working Group – No update

Christmas Lights & Trees Working Group – No update