

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT – PORTFOLIO



Date: 06 October 2025

Author: Various

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

High Bank Car Park

Permits – There is currently one space available. Outstanding payment for one of the permits remains in arrears, a request has been made of the permit holder to bring the account up to date or to agree a payment plan over the remaining period. This non-payment be monitored and council will be kept informed.

High Bank to Pollards Court Footpath – Following an assessment as requested by council, fencing replacement and vegetation works are required. There is a report and costs on this month's agenda for council to consider.

The Meadows (No further update)

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.

Medowhayes – Following a report from a member of the public about the green space at Medowhayes and assessment has been carried out and a report has been provided on this month's agenda for council to consider.

Woodcott Cottage Sewer

Further reports of the overflowing sewer have been received, which has been reported to Environmental Health and Exmoor National Park Authority. EA have advised they are in contact with the two properties owners.

Hawkcombe Stream

Council agreed at the September meeting to hosting a Riparian Owners workshop with Somerset Rivers Authority.

Road Signs & Highways

Mobile Speed Indicator Device – Following the July meeting Highways have reviewed proposals; four of the six locations didn't meet their safety requirements so were not approved. The two remaining locations (Redway and High Street) don't have standard posts and would require modifications. In addition, available data doesn't support the need and given the reduction in desired locations the cost benefit is no longer justifiable, and the project will close. The remaining committed funds will be released back to the Porlock Projects EMR 337.

Salt Bins – A review of the salt bags and bins in the Parish has been completed and added to the annual cycle.

Website & IT infrastructure (No further update)

Website Management – A proposal is being developed for the build of the new improved website (Visual and Functionality) and how to make the move as seamless as possible for all. One of the key considerations is how to improve the process and functionality to store documents while maintaining security to council's system to provide improvements to accessibility and transparency.

Porlock Parish Council Logo (No further update)

Redesign – Pending final amendments. Following engagement with the College 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 a 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 – A light fitting needs replacing in one of the cubicles which will be undertaken as part of regular maintenance.

St Dubricius Churchyard

Unsafe Memorials – Following our appeal the Diocese a statement of needs and statement significance is now required has been requested. A meeting of the faculty will take place on the 8th October.

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Signage remains in place on the eleven memorials that have been deemed unsafe. Signs have also been placed on the three entrances to the churchyard to warn of the unsafe memorials.

Additional Works – (No further update)

Advice and quotes are being obtained and will be presented to Council for consideration once received. Quotes from stone masons to attend to the walls surrounding the churchyard have yet to be obtained. Work initially requested to be completed by autumn 2025 however this is subject to faculty requests being approved by the diocese of bath and wells.

- 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 further update)

The next scheduled visit will take place in October.

Hawkcombe Cemetery

Work progresses on the works as identified on cemetery assessment report and agreed by council. Funding from external sources is currently being sought to enable the programme of works to be considered.

Cemetery steps – Final deployment of safety signage to be carried out by the caretaker and Cllr. J Adlington.

Unsafe Memorials – Work to make these memorials safe has been completed, waiting final report.

Cemetery Shed – After assessment by Cllr. J Adlington work will be carried at cost of materials.

Plots - Remapping of the cemetery will be carried out in relation to remaining available plots. The current mapping is now unrealistic as the space available suggests significantly fewer plots are available than are recorded. The new guideline for plot sizes has made this remapping a necessity.

Hawkcombe Playground (no update)

Grounds Maintenance

Grounds maintenance programme – amendments to the programme still require updating following the September meeting.

Tree Survey – Current quotes have been obtained £1150 + VAT and £1300 + VAT to survey six sites within Porlock. This will be added to the budget planning process 2026-27 for consideration. Many tree surgeons contacted do not carry out surveys.

Old School Centre (Right hand side) – Stone wall needs reviewing. A contractor will be requested to come and assess the wall. (No further update)

Flower Displays/Barrels - The water bowsers have been identified as a safety risk if over filled. The caretaker has briefed the contractors on the filling limits and will devise a safety cut off system to prevent future over filling.

Porlock Marsh War Memorial (no update)

Old School Centre

OSC Shed – Caretaker and Cllr. J Adlington to assess the shed, as it is no longer weatherproof.

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Cleaning Store – installation complete, now in use.

Pellet Boiler – Repairs to the pellet boiler have been completed, during the works a fault was discovered with the lambda probe which has been replaced.

Jubilee Garden – A date for works to commence is to be agreed estimate is November.

Outside Bookcases – These have been removed the Porlock Community Maintenance Team will take the majority of the waste wood for repurposing.

Business Risks

Martyn's Law – Formally known as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, has now received Royal Assent. It is anticipated that there will be a 24-month implementation period. A report has been produced to help council understand the legislation at high level and council's responsibilities.

Business Risks Policy and Register – Risk policy and register to brought up to date and in line with requirements.

Risk Assessments – Library, Doverhay Toilets, Hawkcombe Cemetery & PPC Office Risk Assessments complete. Copies of the reports will be stored on the new council website in the meantime copies are available on request from the office. (No further update)

AGAR Assumption 10 – Training is being offered through Somerset Association of Local Councils the next course is being run on the 27th October.

Business continuity – Work needs to be undertaken to assess council's business continuity plans and Any recommendations will be put to council.

Emergency plan – Next meeting date to be set. Current working timeline to be reviewed with PERT: Q2 to gather and consider information, prepare and first draft documents, Q3 produce draft final proposal, circulate, seek feedback and any required approvals, Q4 Launch. (No further update)

Retention Policy – Training is taking place in October to understand the role of Somerset Archives what materials (agendas, minutes, accounts) that Somerset Archives want from council and how this informs Council's retention policy, procedure to digitisation and future storage of historic files.

Alarm System – The alarm zoning activity has now been completed.

Fire Alarm – the fire alarm is now monitored.

Emergency Lighting - Waiting quote to carry out the recommendations of the report.

Fire Risk Assessment – Now all works have been carried out a reassessment will be arranged.

Waste – Extra waste weight charges were made in September due to the red bin being over by 42kg. This is as a direct result of the public bins at the OSC being filled by domestic waste, origins of the waste are unknown. Recently the bins have been filled with soft furnishings such as cushions.

Water bottle refill units – Waiting assessment of other locations.

Internal Wall damage – Damp damage has been identified in the Parish office in the far corner. Builder has been to assess, and it requires a membrane fitting and re-pointing externally - waiting quote (No further update)

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COSHH – Cleaner supplies have been relocated from the cellar. Check list and COSHH signs to be put up and the COSHH folder will be kept at the required locations.

Somerset Rivers Authority Grant Fund – Monies have been received now the purchase of the items will be made.

Village Hall

Car Park Lease - The outcome of the review undertaken by the PME estate is still unknown. (No further update)

Flooding – Responsibility for the section of road in front of the Village Hall is being challenged, the clerk has made a request of C J Lynch to find out who previously requested the resurfacing works to be carry out in an attempt to resolve responsibility.

Replacement Trees - Trees will be purchased an installed in October

Idverde

Street cleaner – Recruitment remains ongoing, a new advert has been put up in local shops, the PPC website and Facebook (No further update)

Street Furniture, Displays & Equipment

Notice boards at OSC – A site survey has been carried out by Active Signs, feedback on current proposals has been given to enable finalising a proposal to present to Council, costs have been budgeted as part of the OSC project works. (No further update)

Noticeboard at Central Garage – Council deferred the item until an alternative notice board system for the church railings where current users could use these new boards. In the meantime, Mike Johnson has offered to refresh the noticeboard until a decision is made and Covery Museum will take up use of the current vacant board.

Noticeboard outside hardware store - Like for like replacement to be sought. (No further update)

Benches – General – Trial bench has been refurbished, the proposed method of sanding and oiling took a excessive amount of the caretakers' hours and was deemed not cost effective. A review of method for other benches needs to be discussed with the caretaker and agreed with council. (No further update)

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. (No update)

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)

Finger Post by Methodist Church – New signs have been requested. Post s owned by PPC.

Elections

Future dates to be planned. Somerset Elections to advise when their next election will take place. (No update)

Old School Centre Community Hub

Official Launch: to be held on Thursday 16th October 10.00 to noon. Several outside agencies will attend, as well as Library Service personnel

Community Library:

Summer Reading Challenge: final figures were 74 children signed up, with 49 completers. This represents 66%, the average across Somerset Libraries being 63%. The final action of the Challenge was two representatives from the library attending a school assembly to celebrate their pupils success in the Challenge.

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St Dubricius: During September, two classes from the school have visited the library. Library Officer visits Early Years weekly, reading a story then discussing likes and dislikes of the book.

Library Activities: the Yarn Group and Writing for Pleasure Group have reconvened following their summer break. The Cribbage Club, with effect from 8th Oct, will also include board games etc.

Outreach: Library Officer attended Home Start Open Day and PVCIC Community Event.

Community Room:

The Community Room was used four times by outside groups during September and once by the library for a talk. The library also made use of the room, when not booked, for Scrabble, Writing for Pleasure and Cribbage groups hopefully highlighting the space available

Bookings are now being taken through the office and there is an item on this month's agenda for council to consider the terms and conditions of use and tariff rates.

Porlock Village Hall Management Committee – Duncan McCanlis

The Management Committee met on Monday 22nd September.

Car Park Lease - The status of the car park lease with Porlock Manor Estate was briefly discussed. I confirmed that PPC continue to pay the rent and have no plans to pursue PME regarding renewal of the lease.

Caretaker - Mike Johnson has taken on the role of Caretaker, after the resignation of the previous caretaker.

Flooding - Regarding the recent flooding incident, discussions are ongoing between PVH, PPC, PME/Savills and Somerset Council Highways. Both SC and PME are currently of the opinion that it is the other's responsibility. Nigel L reported that the most recent resurfacing of the area in question was carried out by CJ Lynch. They may have records showing who commissioned them. PPC Clerk to be asked to contact them.

Phone Box - Redecoration of the phone box to be discussed with PPC.

Safe - The Maintenance team have drilled a hole in the back of the safe. They will attempt to drill more holes and thus cut out a piece of the back wall sufficient to extract the papers.

Events - Sarah Shorton is keen for the VH to host events, like Take Art. It might be possible for the PPC Events WG to be involved in this, dependent on events running over at least two days so that the village economy is supported. SS will draw up a plan.

Late Night Shopping Working Group – Duncan McCanlis

Date Saturday 13th December, with an additional daytime event at Porlock Weir on Sunday 14th.

Details for both these events are progressing. Publicity has started with an advert in Exmoor Magazine What's On. Entertainers have been booked, others to follow. Santa's Grotto will be in the Community Room at the Old School Centre. Matilda Adlington is organising the set up etc. This should complement the children's activities in the Library. The Santa Dash is being organised by Lesley Thornton (Bagatelle).

St Dubricius are coordinating with us - Living Nativity on the Friday the 12th and Christmas Tree Festival launch on Saturday the 13th.

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We will need a few volunteers on the night - any offers please let Duncan know.

Events and Festival Working Group – Sue McCanlis

Apple Day 25th October 10 – 1pm - OSC Comprises apple pressing, small exhibition, juice tasting, Juice for sale, free refreshments.

Wassail 6th January 2026 - Final details tbc. Joe Mallinson booked for music.

Walk Exmoor Weekend 27th - 29th March 2026 - Five walks of various lengths all contained within the Porlock Pilgrims Trail. Registrations will take place in the OSC on Saturday and Sunday. Eventbrite page live for bookings.

Christmas Lights & Trees Working Group – Sue McCanlis

All in hand, wooden trees repaired and decorated, real trees ordered, electric lights checked and PAT tested. Solar lights for Church railings still to be ordered.

The Old School Centre Community Garden Working Group (No update)

Doverhay Manor Committee (No update)

Doveray Manor Museum (No update)

Local Community Network (No update)