

Porlock Parish Council – Portfolio Report – May 2025

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

Personnel changes:

Two new part time admin officers have started, 1st and 7th May with the current admin officers last working day being the 15th May.

Open Gardens 12 - 13th July

The Old School Centre Gardens will featured in this years open gardens programme.

Website & IT infrastructure

IT management – Migration of mailboxes and IT infrastructure has now been completed. There have been were minor issues relating to historic set up but these have been dealt with on a case by case basis as identified and resolved at pace with Realtime remote resolutions by the suppliers helpdesk.

The office team now have individual IT accounts with multifactor authentication. Shared mailboxes have been set up to enable smooth hand off of work and the council's SharePoint has been successful set up. This provides a strong foundation for council to begin working smarter with technology on its side. Council have been invited to access meeting materials through SharePoint as an initial step towards smarter working.

Website Management - Since the migration of the website management there have been no critical errors. 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.

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 form them if this is required or recommendation no response has been received.

Woodcott Cottage Sewer

A team has emptied the septic tank no further reports of sewage leaks have been reported.

Doverhay Toilets (No further update)

Toilet Reinstatement – An electrician has been to resolve the electrical issues now waiting date for works to be carried out including the light fittings. Racking to be purchased for storing cleaning materials.

Emergency Call Alarms – Quote received and to be approved at the June meeting – the OSC installation was part of the OSC project works

St Dubricius Churchyard

Unsafe Memorial Works – Work is thought to commence at the end of the month.

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 bene 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.

Dunster Steep War Memorial

The annual maintenance was carried out. A new quote for 25-26 has been received for council to consider.

Hawkcombe Cemetery

Cemetery Site Assessment – Work is underway to progress the actions following the meeting of the council in March.

Unsafe Memorials – Following the meeting an updated schedule of works and quote has been requested.

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 - to be followed up.

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 - A resident has reported that the 'no dogs allowed' sign has been taken, this has resulted in the area being used as a toilet for dogs. As a popular picnic spot this is causing great upset. A new sign will be sought and installed (subject to costs)

Grounds Maintenance

Coach Road Gate – Waiting for works to be carried out. Date pending.

Tree Survey – Threepoint have withdrawn from providing Tree Surveys following their decision not to renew their company limited liability based on cost benefit. A new contractor will need to be engaged to carry out council's tree survey.

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

Porlock Marsh War Memorial (no update)

Old School Centre (Building)

Business Risks

Alarm System – All works required are now booked to be completed end of June.

Fire Risk Assessment – All works required are now booked to be completed end of June. Once complete a reassessment will be arranged with the Fire Officer.

Electrical Inspection – All works required are now booked to be completed end of June.

Waste – Sanitary and green waste contracts will be set up to commence in April 2025 following approval of the 2025-2026 Budget. Revised quotes are being obtained.

Flagpole – Waiting quotes for Council to consider.

Outside lights, fairy Lights & Socket fault – All works required are now booked to be completed end of June.

Staff Toilet – Waiting date for lock change to be made.

Water bottle refill unit – this has now been installed next to the seat by the public toilet. Request to Wessex water for approval is outstanding.

Overhead Heaters – Two overhead heaters have been removed to allow future works to be carried out in the community room

Car Park at the Village Hall (No Update)

Idverde bins

Reinstating of three bins – waiting risk assessment to be carried out.

Street Furniture, displays & equipment

Floral Displays – an assessment and advice on how to better manage the villages floral displays has been undertaken by the Clerk and Minehead Town Council's Amenities Manager. A meeting of the current watering team and Cllr S McCanlis has been proposed for the 15th May to discuss how to better manage the displays throughout the year including grant funding. A report will be put to council in June.

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 as part of the OSC project works.

Noticeboard at Central Garage – One of the doors was reported to be hanging off (reported by the information centre). The Porlock Vale Maintenance Team removed the door and have will take on the refurbishment of these noticeboards.

Noticeboard outside hardware store - No further update.

St Dubricius Notice Board - Work on job list - replacement of cork tiles and a coat of paint if necessary, the church have approved this work to take place. Cork tiles on order.

Benches – General – First renovation has started however the Caretaker belt sander has stopped working. This will be taken to the repair café to see if it can be fixed before deciding next steps.

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 – The meeting held on the 22nd April was very productive further work is to be completed by the clerk on draft documents and timescales for the next meeting in June for review by the group . Kingston St Mary's Good Neighbour scheme was shared and this model will be looked into by Debbie Stanyon. The group agreed To call it the Porlock Emergency Response Team (PERT). 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 – Permission from the landowner Falcon Rural Housing was granted. The first sign has been installed. The second sign positioning is to be agreed due to ground works required. There has been mixed reactions from residents, the majority supportive, some asking when council will do something about the parking along the road.

Central Car Park Overnight Sleeping Camping – This item is on the May agenda for council to consider.

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

The next casual vacancy window will be advertised from 16th May 2025 for two weeks .

Porlock Community Library – written by Mary Perkins

Author Talk: by Kate Lord Brown postponed to 15th May - clashed with VE Day.

Easter Events: the two library led ones were a success. The Somerset Skills and Learning event was cancelled due to a lack of interest.

Book Sale: held in the Community Room raised £40 for library funds. It also proved to be a good PR exercise in explaining to over 60 people some of what will be happening at the OSC.

The Big River Watch: hosted by the National Trust Holnicote was a success. Twenty river/stream water testing kits were issued and in the afternoon Discovery Class visited the library to hear about the Holnicote beavers. The children also made use of the colouring sheets, copies of which were put on the new "Our Pictures" board in the children's library area.

Baby Weighing the library is now participating in a Somerset Libraries and NHS Health Visitor initiative enabling parents etc to use the NHS supplied scales to self-weigh their babies in the library whenever it is open. This has arisen due to a shortage of Health Visitors.

Library Expansion: following on from last month. All non-fiction books and local history stock has been relocated to the middle section of the OSC and is being used regularly by our members. The children's library is almost finished with new bench seating (repurposed cupboards), a Lego and Art Cupboard available at all times, re-arranged shelving and the new "Our Picture" board mentioned above - again repurposed.

Late Night Shopping Working Group - No Report

Events and Festival Working Group - No report

The Old School Centre Community Garden Working Group – No update

Christmas Lights & Trees Working Group – No update

Doverhay Manor – No Update.

Porlock Village Hall – No Update

Local Community Network – No Update