

Porlock Parish Council – Portfolio Report November 24

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

Porlock Parish Council Logo

Redesign – detective work has been ongoing to ensure historic information of its creation is accurate and not lost. Unfortunately the file that was in existence (according to a previous Clerk) appears to have vanished from the office – however minutes from 1979 show that the ‘cost of arms’ was never formally adopted by the Council and it was first used by the visitor centre and the Porlock Vale newsletter as a stamp. It was then presented by two donors as the Chairmans regalia later in 1980. Its formal adoption has never been documented.

Following discussion with the College of arms a crest has never been registered and to do so would cost in the region of £25,000 (this is not being proposed)



Figure 1- Draft

Cllr. C Gardner has worked on the redesign and is currently undertaken some further detective work to see if any ‘creative history’ can be found/identified to bring life and meaning to the design. Such as do the six filigrees coming from the helmet represent the six founding families, the three stars are not actually stars in the original design but dots and do these represent the three benefices of Porlock? All to be discovered.

It is hoped that Council will be presented with the final design and history for adoption of in December.

Water Refill Units

Alternative options - Wessex water no longer provide water refill installation. A request for a quote and further information has been sent to the company (Culligan) who made the refill units for Wessex water (the same that is on Minehead seafront)



Idverde bins

Reinstating of three bins – Collection of three bins either replacement or reinstated has been agreed at no extra cost. There is a cost of £75 to complete a risk assessment once the bins have been put in place. The PPC Caretaker will install the new dog waste bin in at Sparkhayes and use the mixed waste recycle bin behind the OSC to reinstate a bin outside the village hall.

Doverhay Toilets

Toilet Cleaning – Due to a cross over of annual leave cover is being sought for 4 days cleaning of the public toilets December 5th – 8th.

Emergency Call Alarms – Currently investigating options to reinstate the emergency call alarm in the accessibility toilets (Doverhay & Old School Centre)

ST Dubricius Churchyard

Tree works approval – The archdeacon has approved the works to the trees in the churchyard. This work will be carried out by Treeatop on the 19th of November. The Churchyard and Church will be closed during works. The clerk has been liaising with the Church Warden to ensure all requirements are in place including insurance, risk assessment and Method statements all which are in file.

A notice has been put on the PPC website Facebook page and Porlock Facebook page

Hawkcombe Cemetery

Unsafe memorials update - The 120 unsafe memorials have now largely been identified. Of these, 64 are within the EROB deed period of 75 years. However, we only have the next of kin details for two of these memorials as historically we did not collect this data.

Caroline has written to the deed holder of one of these memorials, sadly with a kerbset which are more expensive to repair. The news was not met favourably by the deed holder came to the office and had a long chat with the Clerk. The situation was understood however there were concerns about the accuracy of the report and the deed holder will follow up with fine memorials. It was acknowledged whatever the outcome the deed holder was happy to pay to have the work done. It was misunderstood that Council would be flattening the cemetery, the deed holder was delighted to hear that Council were taking action but felt H&S has gone mad.

With regards to the remaining unsafe memorials within the 75 year grant period, Caroline will be liaising with both Chris Fitzgerald and Chris Miles to see if they recognise any of the family names who may still be present in the village.

All memorials identified are also being added to the listing of cemetery database.

Cemetery process improvements Visit to Watchet - On Thursday 17th October, the Admin Officer visited Watchet Town Council to see how they ran their cemetery. This was a useful trip and Watchet were very generous with their time and data shared. We now have templates of Watchet's forms and will be reviewing our procedures and making recommendation to council over the following months to ensure tighter control of operations. Their computer software program for the cemetery was also demonstrated which is something maybe worth considering at a later date.

Condition of Hawkcombe Cemetery - The Admin Officer visited Hawkcombe Cemetery on 7th November to look at a broken memorial bench which is situated on the top path. The journey up was very slippery due to moss and lack of a handrail. The top path is also uneven due to tree root heave and which caused slips on several occasions when accessing graves to take pictures, having to grab hold of headstones to prevent falling. There has been a request to inter ashes into the top of the cemetery, but it was felt the risk of accident to mourners would be too high and has advised the funeral director that in this case we could not accommodate their request other than in the Garden of Rest. The Clerk will arrange an asset review and risk assessment to be undertaken in the near future and report back to Council.

Costs - Final quotes and method statements will be brought to council in December. Current expectations suggest work would commence in spring of 2025. Estimate figures at the moment are in the region of £28-30k (inc VAT) to fix all loose memorials.

Porlock Marsh War Memorial

Bench - A bench specification has been provided to Savills for approval. Once received the bench will be purchased and delivered to PME for installation - Sourced from Threapton Simmons bath sawmills - £140 +VAT. Budget already approved spend from EMR.

Old School Centre (Building)

Bins - the Black wheelie bin and the waste bins on site are being filled by a mystery person/s with black refuse bags of waste and often mixed waste including food. There has been two occasions now where maggots have been found in the wheelie bin. The caretaker is reviewing options to securing the bin to prevent access

Green Bin - Council have no Green bin waste contract and although the grounds maintenance contractor does his best to take away extra waste it is becoming more challenging so cost to implement green waste collection for the OSC have been added to the budget process.

Sanitary waste - Costs to implement sanitary waste collections at council provided toilets has been added to the budget process for consideration.

Flagpole - Repair to the mid-section of the flagpole has not been possible, advice was that any repair could weaken the structure and therefore be a safety issue - a replacement section is being sought costs will be presented to Council.

Outside lights & Outside socket OSC fault - A fault has been reported with the lighting and outside socket not working at the OSC. Further investigations will be undertaken by a qualified electrician.

Car Park at the Village Hall

Entrance Gate & Post - A contractor has been asked for a quote

Street Furniture & displays

Notice boards at OSC – Further work will be undertaken to identify the right solution at the right price replace the notice board as part of the OSC project plans

Noticeboard at Central Garage – An offer has been made to Doverhay Museum to make use of the redundant Parish Council notice board in the set.

Noticeboard outside hardware store - Following a discussion with PHH there is no perceived issue with proposed changes to the noticeboard. It will now be checked that if planning is required for a slightly bigger board that would accommodate 3-4 x 3 pieces of A4 portrait

St Dubricius Notice Board - We are now using the Parish Notice board inside the porch of the Church to display Parish notices

Highways Report written by Cllr. S Colson, 6th November, 2024

Traffic and Road Safety Working Group

The white 'keep clear' lines near the allotment on Parson's Street have been repainted. Parking will be monitored to see if the new lines are having the desired effect or whether further measures will be needed. The white lines indicating the virtual footpath on Dunster Steep have been repainted.

We still await feedback from the Somerset Area Highways Manager regarding various road improvements in the village ('informal' pedestrian crossing, widening the virtual footpath at Dunster Steep and aligning dropped kerbs on the High Street to improve accessibility). It is hoped that contact can be made during the November Exmoor LCN meeting.

Car Parks Working Group

A lead councillor has been assigned for this group (S Colson) and membership for the group has been advertised. At the time of writing, at least 2 members of the public have come forward and the group's first meeting is planned for the first half of December.

Other Highways matters

The work order for the new road signs on either side of the Meadowhayes Road junction with the A39 has been issued, designed to direct traffic to Sparkhayes campsite via Meadowhayes Road. We await advice on when the work will be done.

Following feedback from the Somerset Traffic Management team, it doesn't appear possible to create a set of road signs at the junction between Sparkhayes Lane and the High Street, to direct pedestrians to the campsite via Sparkhayes Lane and vehicles via the High Street and Meadowhayes Road. A combination of lack of space, available road sign design and the possibility of creating confusion with the signage means that the intended outcome is not practical. The Sparkhayes campsite owner has been engaged in the process and is doing everything possible to minimise campsite traffic on Sparkhayes Road.

There has been further delay in issuing the TRO's for the yellow lines on Redway, the kerb ticks on the High Street and the Disabled Parking Bay on the High Street. These are now expected in December.

No other Working Group updates received