

Porlock Parish Council – Portfolio Report - January 2025

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

Porlock Parish Council Logo

Redesign – The redesign has been submitted to Council for consideration.

Idverde bins

Reinstating of three bins – Mick Limb has been asked to assist the Caretaker with installation of the bins as they need to be secured in position (Doverhay Car Park & Outside Village Hall). Once installed a risk assessment will be undertaken by Idverde.

Doverhay Toilets

Toilet Reinstatement – the reinstatement has been completed and the old toilet removed. An electrician will be booked to reconnect the door sensor for the light and washing facilities to function. The light fitting also requires changing as the bulbs are no longer available and will be replaced by an LED light.

Emergency Call Alarms – No further progress

St Dubricius Churchyard

Unsafe Memorial Works – Works will commence in the Spring (date TBC)

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.
- Masonry wall to the south. Cavities in between stones is showing a loss of mortar. This whole wall could undergo a consolidation.
- Post finial a quote from West Country Blacksmiths was approved by Council however the work has not been completed despite chasing. A new contractor will be sought.
- 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.

Hawkcombe Cemetery written by Caroline Harding 9th January, 2025

Register of interments - the register of interments has now been checked and completed since May 1991 (amounting to 477 entries) and more importantly has now identified all interments since records ceased during the pandemic (amounting to 16). The official Register of Burials has now been completed and is up to date.

Completion of the register of interments will continue until all interments are computerised since 1977 to ensure compliance with the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order.

Pre Purchased Plots - All pre-purchased burial plots have been identified and marked accordingly.

Cemetery Process Improvements - Current processes are working well to ensure all data is captured and processed, although next steps will be to review and update our interment forms and burial instructions to ensure compliance, in particular the Assignment of Rights of Burial which to-date we have no formal paperwork for.

Cemetery Site Assessment - The planned risk assessment of the cemetery was not carried out in December due to weather conditions and will take place during January subject to weather.

Unsafe Memorials – A Risk assessment and a method statement has now been received from Fine Memorials along with subsequent quotes to make all memorials deemed as unstable, safe. Recommendations will be put to Council at February's Ordinary meeting once the site visit and risk assessment has been completed.

Grave Plots - Plot markers will be purchased and installed to ensure that graves are dug in correct positions as this has caused numerous complications to-date.

Cemetery Fees - Cemetery fees are under review and a list has been compiled from other local cemeteries to use as a comparison. Recommendations will be presented at February Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

Membership of the ICCM - It is proposed that the Council becomes a member of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM). The cost to join would be £100 (2024 rate) and would enable us to have help and advice on all matters relating to the cemetery as well as discounted training and updates in legislation etc.

Memorial Benches

Kingdon – The bench has been installed. Once the invoice for installation has been received payment will be requested.

Other Benches – It is known that several other benches have deteriorated. A full assessment will be carried out during the site visit and included in the report along with new policy and procedures for purchase, ongoing maintenance and renewal of benches.

Grounds Maintenance

Storm Damage – Council received many reports of trees and fencing damage during the recent storms. Alan Binding has been working round the clock prioritising where needed. Recent high winds have brought a tree down in Church lane blocking the gate and Somerset Council have also been contacted about the trees in the picnic area at the bottom of Central Car Park. A request to obtain a quote for total fence repair at Villes Lane has been requested for Council's consideration.

Tree Survey - Threeatop have been instructed to carry out the tree survey following approval of the spend by Council. Date pending.

Ivy Hedge Old School Centre (Right hand side) – The Ivy has been removed. This has revealed a couple of places in the stone wall that need reviewing. A contractor will be requested to come and assess the wall.

Porlock Marsh War Memorial

Bench – Payment has been made, now waiting delivery of the bench. Porlock Manor Estate will be contacted once this has been received for installation.

Old School Centre (Building)

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

Flagpole – Waiting quotes for Council to consider.

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 as part of the outstanding electrical installation works.

Outside fairy Lights – A power Failure fault was triggering the OSC alarm in December resulting daily call outs. It was identified that this coincided with the 'timer' for the outside lights being turned on. These have been turned off to prevent the risk of fire and until further inspection of the electrics can be carried out.

Locks – Internal and external locks will be changed on the 23rd January now the information centre has relocated. Once completed a new key register will be maintained to keep accurate records of keyholders.

For internal updates see OSC Project Report .

Car Park at the Village Hall

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

Street Furniture, displays & equipment

Notice boards at OSC – Proposal to be developed and costs to be obtained.

Noticeboard at Central Garage – Clerk to contact users – waiting refurbishment, added to the work list.

Noticeboard outside hardware store - To check with ENPA re planning.

St Dubricius Notice Board - Noticeboard is in quite poor state (warping) – Church Warden has been contacted waiting reply.

Benches – Agreement has been reached in how to approach the refurbishment and tools to be used. The PPC Caretaker will carry out first renovation at the OSC as a test for review once the weather improves nearer to spring.

Bleed Kits - Porlock Vale Defibrillator Scheme have successfully arranged the installation of limpet bleed kits at One Stop, Abbeyfield and at Porlock Weir Car Park. A limpet kit is still required for the defibrillator at the Recreation Ground which hopefully will be completed in the next month.

Defibrillators - In addition the PVDS have been successful in seeking permission to have an additional defibrillator installed on Healey's following a suggestion from Malcom McCoy. Fundraising is now underway by the PVDS to raise the monies required. Work is ongoing to look at the feasibility of installing a defibrillator and bleed kit in the phone box outside the Village hall.

Emergency Radios – A test was undertaken by Alistair Campbell and some willing volunteers. They spent the morning testing the radio handsets. Unfortunately, the tests proved that the units were unable to communicate over the hilly terrain around Porlock Parish. Digital channels were only operating at about 25% and analogue channels were too noisy to be practical. In addition Exmoor Search and Rescue have been approached to understand what system they use which has drawn a similar result. Therefore base stations would be required at key locations 'refuge' locations that could communicate between each other to relay messages.

Highways Report written by Cllr. S Colson, 9th January, 2025

Traffic and Road Safety Working Group - Our questions for the 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) have now also been raised with our Somerset Councillors. Feedback however, is still awaited.

The PPC Clerk and Councillor S. Colson have taken and passed Traffic Management training. There is a small amount of additional equipment needed to enable safe movement and installation of a mobile SID. Quotes will be obtained and if this does not fit within the currently approved budget, this will be brought forward to the February council meeting.

Car Parks Working Group - The Car Parks WG terms of reference have been approved and a very productive initial meeting has been held. Priorities for the group have been agreed, and the following information is being sought from Somerset Council, to be reviewed at the WG's next meeting (TBD):

- Annual cost of season tickets for Central car park
- Requirements for season tickets at Doverhay car park
- Costings for additional limited duration free parking bays at Doverhay and Central car parks
- Daily and monthly/seasonal occupancy data at Doverhay and Central car parks to help understand patterns of use
- Rationale for short and long term parking fee structures at Doverhay and Central car park respectively
- The possibility of having more frequent traffic enforcement officer patrols
- Review and effectiveness of road signage, signposting the Doverhay and Central car parks

Other Highways matters

TROs - 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 have now been shared with the PPC Highways Steward (Cllr. S. Colson) and the Clerk. There being no issues with them, the notices advertising the TRO's will now be prepared and we will assist in communicating the notices, which is expected to happen during January.

Porlock Hill Road Signs – Another request has been put in to Somerset Council Highways to address the poor condition of the road signs on Porlock Hill. An earlier request resulted in Highways concluding that it was too unsafe for their highways steward and were looking at alternative options.

Festival & Events Working Group written by Cllr. S McCanlis 8th January, 2025

Coleridge weekend 27 - 30th March - 99 tickets have been sold. There are nine events with a total of 350 spaces. The tickets are now available online to the general public via our PPC website and Eventbrite.

Posters and flyers are being printed on Friday which will be distributed across the South West in libraries and information centres.

Wassail - This was a successful event – a collaboration, coordinated by Sue McCanlis, between PPC, Dovery Manor Museum, Porlock Community Orchard and the Mummers play performers. A report has been sent to the West Somerset Free Press. George Odie, photographer for WSFP, was in attendance.

Christmas Lights & Trees Working Group

‘Light up Porlock’ a group of fourteen volunteers came together to put up Christmas lights across Porlock and install Christmas trees in barrels and on buildings. The group was aided by the Village maintenance team (Churchyard trees) and members of the Carnival Committee (wooden trees above the shops). The Community room at OSC was used for sorting and checking the lights, before and after installation, and for providing refreshment to the volunteers

No other Working Group updates received