PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT – PORTFOLIO

Date: 06 November 2026 **Author: Various**

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

High Bank Car Park (Oct 26)
Permits – There are now no parking spaces available. Another permit-holder is in arrears – see RFO Report.

Hawkcombe Stream (Nov 26)
We continue to receive concerns from residents regarding overhanging trees/overgrown vegetation and the lack of coordinated approach since the Environment Agency will no longer be maintaining the stream. Environment & Amenities Committee recommendation to be considered by Council at the November meeting.

Railings on Parsons Street (Nov 26)
A walkabout meeting took place with Somerset Cllr. S Pugsley and the Clerk, as the railings separating Parsons Street and Hawkcombe Stream are unsafe. Report submitted to Somerset Council.

Road Signs & Highways (Nov 26)
All the outstanding Highways matters in the Parish of Porlock are as follows:

Meadowhayes Bank - The Somerset Area Highways Manager has agreed to level the bank which was made uneven following the work to install a retaining wall, at the junction between Meadowhayes Road and The Meadows. The work is expected to be done this Autumn, subject to Highways resources.

Burleys Hairdressers - The Property Management Agent for the owner of Burleys hairdressers in Porlock has agreed with Somerset Highways for the work to repair the shop front to occur in September or October this year. An update has been requested.

Dunster Steep - The work order for installing signage to improve pedestrian safety at Dunster Steep has been issued by Somerset Highways to their contractor. An update was requested and Highways have confirmed that they should know more in a month's time.

Redway - The order has been sealed to remove 5m of double yellow lines on Redway. An update was requested and Highways have confirmed that they should know more in a month's time.

Redway - a resident has raised concerns regarding the narrow section on Redway. A request has been made to Highways about whether it would be possible for rumble strips to be installed at the same time as at Dunster Steep. They have confirmed that they should know more in a month's time.

Website & IT infrastructure (Sep 26)
Website Management – This project is on hold until Spring 2027 to allow alignment with the new accounts and cemetery system. 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 (Mar 26) – Cllr. Adlington and the Clerk have an action to digitise the current logo.

Doverhay Toilets (Oct 26)
Following the annual asset assessment several items need addressing. This will be presented at the Environment & Amenities Committee meeting for consideration.

A quote has been requested for an external sensor light to be purchased and installed at the service entrance, following a request from the cleaner.

Drains (Nov 26)
Somerset Highways are under considerable pressure following a difficult winter on the roads and as such they will not be undertaking routine drainage clearing and have to risk assess which immediate issues will be rectified and which cannot be attended to. The drain at Doverhay Car Park has been reported as blocked again. A walkabout meeting took place with Somerset Cllr. S Pugsley and the Clerk, with a further report submitted to Somerset.

St Dubricius Churchyard
Unsafe Memorials (Nov 26) - No further update due to the extensive scaffolding works taking place.

- The method statement for the individual memorial provided by the War Memorial Conservation Group has now been accepted and has been waiting for final approval.
- Simon Morgan will assess all required churchyard works, including the memorials, walls and preaching cross. It was checked in advance that this assessment can be carried out while the scaffolding is being erected. A quotation for carrying out the works.
- As qualified conservators, the company will take a different approach from memorial masons, which may help move the matter forward.
- The main caveat is how much work can be undertaken while the church works are in progress.

Additional Works – (Sept 26)
MS Group Limited will be looking at some of the works outlined below but are unlikely to be able to address the footpath. These works and any respective quotes will be heard at the next appropriate Environment and Amenities committee meeting once received. Work initially requested to be completed by autumn 2025 however this is subject to faculty requests being submitted 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.
- 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 (Nov 26)
The 6 monthly clean has been completed ahead of Remembrance Services. The caretaker is making a frame for the wreaths to be attached to, which will keep them in place during periods of bad weather. Frame is now complete and was installed on 5 November 2026.

Porlock Marsh War Memorial (Nov 26)
Having previously removed the rotten stile step for safety reasons, the caretaker has now cut out a section of the fence to allow access to the memorial.

Porlock Cemetery
Improvement works – (Nov 26)

As identified on cemetery assessment report and agreed by council. Funding from external sources is being sought to enable the programme of works to be considered. An initial review for the priority of works has been carried out by the chair of the Burials & Memorials committee and proposals will be discussed by the Environment & Amenities and Finance & HR committees as part of the annual budget process.

Quote requested for initial works, replacing of handrails etc – scope to be agreed.

Benches (Nov 26)
Costs have been identified to supply two new composite benches for the cemetery. Installation costs, i.e. securing to the existing concrete base and the installation of a new concrete base have been requested. Still awaiting response.

Memorial Inspection – (Nov 26)
Report has been chased and has been promised by end of w/c 2 November.

Cemetery Shed – (Nov 26 – no update)
Local contractor has been contacted to carry out repairs, quote was resolved by council at the May meeting. Date of works to be confirmed following issuing of the works order. Works are now urgent as the hinge on one of the doors has become detached. Works order has been acknowledged by contractor. No date for commencement of work has been provided. The cemetery shed has been completely cleared and cleaned out so it can be used for storage once the doors are replaced and a lock has been attached.

Plots - (Nov 26 – no further update)
The process for remapping the cemetery plots has now been established and carried out which resulted in circa 90 plots remain available. Plot markers will be ordered to be placed on each available plot. This is aimed at making things more efficient when directing the grave digger to a particular space.

Quotations have been requested for grave shoring with a lockable lid as this is a requirement for grave digging going forward and will be included in the annual budget process.

Hawkcombe Playground (No update)

Porlock Weir Car Park (Oct 26)
We continue to receive numerous complaints from users of the car park operated by Horizon Parking. We signpost to contact Horizon directly and have raised these concerns with Porlock Manor Estate.

Grounds Maintenance
Devolved Grounds Maintenance (Nov 26) – Somerset Council are unable to provide the original agreement from 2013 and have suggested a new agreement is drawn up. Environment & Amenities Committee's recommendation - to submit a formal expression of interest in the devolution of certain assets and services - will be considered by Council at the November meeting.

Tree Survey (Nov 26) – Concerns were raised about the felling of the Irish Yew at the cemetery. A more conservative approach in reducing the tree rather than felling was explored with the tree surgeons and a quotation for these revised works will be requested once a final decision has been reached. It was suggested by the tree surgeons that to achieve an appealing result might be challenging.

Street Cleaning (Apr 26) – Somerset Council will review the contract as part of its normal process before the contract ends. Environment & Amenities Committee deferred the item and will consider needs following service review.

Coach Road / Church View Path (Nov 26) – A dangerous tree was removed from the path by our contractor. A complaint has been received as the fence has come down due to the tree being removed. The contractor has assessed the fence and will provide a quote for replacement. The contractor will also be clearing pathway vegetation as part of contractual arrangements. The Environment & Amenities committee have discussed maintenance of the path and fence requirements, and this will go to full Council once a quote has been received. Quote has been chased again as not yet received.

ZigZag Path (Sep 26)
Discussions to be held with Exmoor National Park Authority (July 2027) to renew the Permitted Path from the dog field up to the Horseshoe from September 2027.

Old School Centre
Old School Centre East & West Walls (Nov 26) – A works order has been sent for the contractor to repair the damaged East wall, which is currently unsafe. The other less urgent recommendations will be considered by Council at the November meeting.

Emergency Lighting (Nov 26) – Installed at the end of October.

OSC Orchard (Nov 26) – When the weather permits, all the benches in the OSC Orchard will be painted. The Community Orchard Group have kindly offered to volunteer their time in February to prune the tress in the OSC Orchard.

OSC Pond Project (Nov 26) – Cllr. Heath informed Environment & Amenities Committee members that an external organisation had shown great interest in taking on the project on behalf of the Council and was awaiting final approval to transfer unspent grant funding to the project. Cllr. Heath will liaise with the organisation and grant provider.

Water Leak/OSC Pipework (Nov 26) – Wessex Water have confirmed that they will repair the leak, which is coming from the roadside, but it is not yet confirmed when the repair will take place, as the road will need to be closed and it is a very small leak. Quotes for the replacement of the old OSC Pipework are still being chased.

Boiler (Nov 26) – The boiler ignition failed, this has been replaced and is now working again.

Caretaker Shed (Oct 26) – The electrician has assessed and we await a quote for the electrical supply to be extended to the caretaker's shed so that batteries can be charged and a light can be fitted.

Village Hall
Flooding (No update) – Responsibility remains disputed and unresolved; a meeting has been requested with Porlock Manor Estate to try and find a way forward.

Parish Defibrillators
Management (Nov 26) – Porlock Parish Council is now overseeing the management of the parish defibrillators and completing the monthly maintenance checks of each device. The defibrillator at Porlock Recreation Ground will also be coming under the Council's management.

Village Hall Phone Box (Sep 26) – Redecoration work has taken place, once funding has been secured a defibrillator will be purchased and installed.

Street Furniture, Displays & Equipment
Notice boards at OSC – Top of Steps (Nov 26) – Quotes to be obtained as directed by the Environment & Amenities Committee.

Noticeboard at Central Garage (Nov 26) – Quotes to be obtained as directed by the Environment & Amenities Committee.

Noticeboard outside Hardware store (Nov 26) – Quotes to be obtained as directed by the Environment & Amenities Committee.

Benches – General (Nov 26) – Quotes to be obtained as directed by the Environment & Amenities Committee.

River Monitors (Oct 26) - Porlock Parish Council has been approached to have flood river monitors fitted. Upon chasing Somerset they advised that they do not currently have capacity for this project, but they hope to be able to provide an update at the end of this year.

Water bottle refill units (Nov 26)
Porlock Manor Estate are engaged and are in the process of deciding where they want to install a unit. Emails were exchanged in May but there has been no further response from Savills.

Wessex Water have assessed Horner, the Recreation Ground and Selworthy.

Doverhay Car Park - The Council will consider whether to open discussions with Somerset Council about installing a unit here. The Environment & Amenities Committee will review the matter and make a recommendation to Council.

Wootton Courtenay shop have not yet replied.

Elections (Oct 26)
One nomination received for the most recent election as well as two new Councillor's co-opted.

Porlock Emergency Response (PER) Team (Nov 26)
'Go-live' date is planned for November once all channels are up and running. A leaflet drop with information for residents will take place to all properties in the Parish.

Old School Centre Community Hub
Community Library -
The monthly Community Coffee and Chat drop-in, which offers people an opportunity to contact several professional agencies all in one place continues. Due to other commitments some agencies are unable to attend ever month. Regular attendees are Thrive (Village Agent), West Somerset Food Cupboard and Pantry, EMpact West Somerset, Manor from Heaven and Age UK. Amanda-Louise Funeral Services now attending. Age UK also offer a service Friday mornings.
The library held one successful author talk but had to cancel another due to a lack of support.
The quarterly Community Library Partnership meeting showed that footfall between July – September was very similar to the same period during 2025/26 despite there having been less events. Physical issues of books was down by 6% compared to the same period 2025/26 but was not a concern!
The library has now completed trialling the use of iPads to carry out some of the day-to-day work. This will be rolled out to all Community Libraries in Somerset during the coming months.
Somerset Rivers Authority, as part of Somerset Flood Awareness Month watery themed craft morning (28th October) for children was attended by five very enthusiastic young people.

Lovelace Resources Community Centre - The LRCC continues to offer a valuable service to the community for printing, design, laminating etc. There is a steady customer base.

Community Room – usage of the room is gradually increasing. The NHS Health Checks continue fortnightly, the monthly Community Drop-In with multiple agencies in attendance make use of both the Community Room space and the library. Various organisations now hold meetings in the room.

Village Hall – Duncan McCanlis (Jul 26)
A resolution was passed to spend c. £1,200 on upgrading the stage lighting in the big hall.
Insurance arrangements have been reviewed and updated guidance will be issued to users, with particular emphasis on the need for some organisations to provide their own Public Liability Insurance.

Rosalinde Haw wishes to stand down as Treasurer. Diane Renton has been approached, and it was agreed that she should be appointed, subject to a successful handover in the coming months.

Dovery Manor Committee – Duncan McCanlis (Jul 26)
At a meeting of the trustees and myself on 1st June, DMC resolved to work with the Museum charity with the aim of dissolving both charities and creating a new CIO. A working group was set up of two trustees for each of the organisations.
Since then no updates have been received. Council will need to approve of any such change, when we are informed of the details.

Events and Festival Working Group – Sue McCanlis (Sep 26)
A request to reinstate the Christmas Lights & Tree working group is on this month's agenda.

Local Community Network – Duncan McCanlis (Jul 26)
At the LCN meeting on Thursday 11th June, the following topics were discussed:

Highways - Gave an update on the Winter maintenance programme.

Avon & Somerset Police - Provided their usual update on crime statistics.

Exmoor Young Voices - Their Chair, Robyn Gummer and a member, Megan, spoke of what they do and their plans. Their overall purpose is to support young people living and working on Exmoor, particularly on housing, employment and childcare, with the aim of ensuring people can continue living and working on Exmoor.

They are currently working on self-build projects; one completed, two in progress. They give advice on legalities and practical advice. They work with Housing Associations and the Exmoor Society.

Somerset Youth Alliance - Paul Matcham was due to speak but was not present.

Exmoor National Park - Sue Applegate gave an informative talk on Rights of Way. Public RoW generally go across private land. There are 221,700 kms of RoW in the UK. Permissions include:

- Footpaths - walking
- Bridleways - walking, cycling & riding
- Restricted Byways - as above, plus non-motorised carriages
- Byway - open to all traffic
- And c. 300kms of Permitted Paths, on private land, kept up by ENPA.

The historical basis for these is based on the 1949 map. This is now digitised and available online at Somerset Council.

They survey all paths every six years. Actions are followed up by their Access & Recreation Team. Based at Exford, where they make gates, fingerposts etc. their Field Services Team and volunteers go out and do the work. We can report matters at 'SomersetRoam' online. Their Rangers are intending to come to LCN meetings.

Next meeting: 10th September 2026 at 7pm.