PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT – PORTFOLIO

Date: 02 April 2026 **Author: Various**

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

Environment & Amenities Committee 25 March 2026
The Committee met and considered a range of operational and environmental matters for recommendation to council. The committee agreed proposals for manual weeding, litter management, floral displays and maintenance of the Jubilee Garden, approving indicative annual budgets and recommending the use of contractors supported by clear works specifications. Members also reviewed green space management, confirming continued maintenance of the Old School Centre Community Garden and supporting the removal of St Dubricius Churchyard from the grounds contract to join the Wilder Churches scheme, with the aim of being cost neutral and improving biodiversity.

Further recommendations were agreed in relation to improved litter provision, including new and seasonal bin collections, noticeboard replacements at the Old School Centre, and updated signage wording. Progress updates were received on the Community Orchard pond project, biodiversity initiatives and asset assessments, with some items deferred due to time constraints or pending external reviews. Overall, the committee focused on strengthening environmental management, supporting biodiversity, and ensuring value for money through structured maintenance and contractor arrangements.

Minutes from the meeting can be found on the council's website or by clicking this link.

High Bank Car Park (Apr 26)
Permits – Car Parking Renewal Forms have been sent to all permit-holders. There are no current vacancies and all outstanding bills have been settled.

High Bank to Pollards Court Footpath (Apr 26) – Works completed.

Power Interruptions (Apr 26)
Following an enquiry sent to National Grid an investigation into the frequency of power outages in the parish is underway. National Grid has responded and will send a letter with a report of their findings.

The Meadows
Red line markings (Apr 26) The road was closed for remedial earthworks and is now back open. We are yet to receive any information about if there is likely to be any other works required. Reports of the area being left in a state – site visit required to investigate and report to Somerset Council as necessary.

Meadowhayes (Apr 26) – Works completed.

Villes Lane (Apr 26) – Council received two complaints about the amount litter and dog waste at the top of Villes lane and the requirement for a bin. In addition, it was suggested that could council provide litter picking equipment so volunteers could act. A feasibility study and risk assessment has been completed on the installation of a bin and recommendation will be considered by Council at the April meeting.

Hawkcombe Stream (Apr 26)
Riparian Workshops were held in the Community Room at the Old School Centre on the 4th March were well attended.

Road Signs & Highways
Road Safety (Apr 26) – A number of residents have raised concerns with road safety at Doverhay-Dunster Steep, this was discussed at the March Council meeting. A site visit will be carried out

between Council's Highways Representative (Cllr S Colson) and Somerset Council Highways to review all options.

Website & IT infrastructure (No 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 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 a heraldic device". Clarification has been sought form them if this is required or recommendation, no response has been received. Cllr Adlington and the Clerk have an action to digitise the current logo.

Doverhay Toilets (Apr 26)
Following the annual asset assessment several items need addressing. A full report will be presented to council along with all other asset reviews for consideration.

St Dubricius Churchyard
Unsafe Memorials (Apr 26) – The Diocese have queried the method proposed and has requested alternative approach. Quotation/Method Statement has been received from memorial masons to repair memorial that is particularly unsafe. Emergency faculty being applied for in early April. An 'Emergency' faculty will be submitted for the dangerous memorial located by the footpath

Signage remains in place on the memorials that have been deemed unsafe. Safety signs have been replaced, and one unsafe memorial by the pathway has been made temporarily safe.

Additional Works – (No 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.

These works were scheduled to be heard at the Environment and Amenities committee meeting in March however due to time constraints the items were deferred to the next meeting.

War Memorial (No update)

Hawkcombe Cemetery
Improvement works – (No update)
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.

Unsafe Memorials – (Apr 26)
Appointed contractors commenced memorial reinstatement works at the cemetery on 8th March. At 1st April, approximately 40 of the memorials have been fixed, so this is more than halfway. All headstones on the level not in kerb sets have now been reinstated. Contractors expect the work will take another two weeks to complete depending on the weather, they are aiming to be finished by end April at the latest.

Cemetery Shed – (Apr 26)
Local contractor has been contacted to carry out repairs, awaiting a date they're available to do the works. Cost to repair to be agreed awaiting quote.

Plots - (No update)
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.

War Grave – (Apr 26)
Commonwealth War Graves Commission provide services to the German Government which includes maintaining their war graves in the UK and elsewhere. CWGC and the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund) have identified some German War Graves in the UK that are not being maintained and are not properly marked. The grave of Wilhelm Reuhl at Porlock is one of those identified as needing to be marked and then maintained.

The headstone has been made and will make its way to the UK over the coming weeks. Once it has arrived a date will be planned to instal the memorial and hold a small ceremony to mark the event. An exclusive right of memorial permit has been granted, and a standard pattern German war grave headstone will be installed by CWGC staff once it is ready.

Council are currently assisting CWGC with historic information for the event. The installation of several temporary markers over the years is a significant gesture and this installation will make this memorial a more permanent and official headstone.

Hawkcombe Playground (No update)

Grounds Maintenance
Devolved Grounds Maintenance (Apr 26) – In touch with Somerset Council to try and ascertain the exact agreement what areas of grounds maintenance were devolved from West Somerset Council to PPC in 2013. Chased again 31st March 2026.

Tree Survey (Apr 26) – Recommendation to be received by Council at the April meeting and decision to be made regarding appointment of a contractor.

Flower Displays/Barrels (Apr 26) – Asset review of the flower displays to be undertaken by Cllr S McCanlis. E&A Committee recommendations for the management of the floral displays will be heard at the council meeting in April.

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

Porlock Marsh War Memorial (No update)
Information received that the stile and fence to get to the War Memorial are rotten and quite wobbly. Reported to Porlock Manor Estate for action.

Old School Centre

Old School Centre East & West Walls (Apr 26) – Requests have been made of contractors to assess the wall and provide quotes. One contractor so far has come out to assess, awaiting two others.

Jubilee Garden (Apr 26) – This is on the agenda for the April Council meeting.

Smart Meter (Apr 26) – Provider did not turn up for installation, to be re-booked.

Emergency Lighting (No Update)- Awaiting quote for consideration to carry out the recommendations of the report.

Internal Wall damage (Apr 26) – Damp damage has been identified in the Parish office in the far corner. Builders have attended again and we are now waiting to see if the problem reoccurs. No further water ingress observed – builder will be asked to re-plaster the wall.

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
Village Hall Phone Box (No update) – Quote received for the installation of power spur in preparation for a defibrillator in the old phone box by the Village Hall.

Street Furniture, Displays & Equipment
Notice boards at OSC – Top of Steps (Apr 26) – A review of current proposals is being carried out by the E&A committee. A proposal and costing will go to Council in due course.

Noticeboard at Central Garage (No update) – 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 Dovery Museum will take up use of the current vacant board.

Noticeboards Church Railings (No update) – A prototype A3 board has been tested and is currently being reviewed and costed.

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

Benches – General (No update) – A review of benches is to be carried out by Cllr. D McCanlis.

River Monitors (No update) **-** Porlock Parish Council has been approached to have flood river monitors fitted.

Finger Post by Methodist Church (Apr 26) – Wording has been agreed by the Environment & Amenities Committee. Awaiting final design and costs for approval.

Water bottle refill units (Apr 26) – Cllr D McCanlis to provide the office with contact details for keyholders of each service area to then be passed on to Wessex Water.

Elections (Apr 26)
The next election will take place on 7th May 2026. Notice of Election for two vacancies has been advertised.

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, is starting to take off, with more agencies

coming on board. The Duke of Edinburgh volunteer has now completed the volunteering segment of their bronze award. Craft mornings are planned during the Easter holidays Another selection of very recently published books has been purchased for the library's "Best Seller" section. Being able to borrow these is much appreciated by our customers.

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 increasing. The NHS Health Checks continue to use the room, the monthly Community Drop-In with multiple agencies in attendance make use of both the Community Room space and the library. Porlock Youth Club are using the room every Monday evening (term time – at present). There was a visit from the Curious and Fascinating Museum (SW Heritage) who entertained children from Oaks Nursery and Discovery Class with their artefacts and the library hosted an author talk enjoyed by 20 people.

Porlock Village Hall Management Committee – Duncan McCanlis (No update)

Late Night Shopping Working Group – Duncan McCanlis (No update)

Events and Festival Working Group – Sue McCanlis (No Update)

National Cycle Hill climb - 24/25th October 2026 - Cllrs. Heath and S McCanlis are working with Exmoor National Park to organise Dark Skies events suitable for families during the weekend. Venues will be the Recreation Ground and pavilion, the Old School Centre and Library. Minehead Cycle club will organise the cycling with a base at the Village Hall. This will bring a lot of people, cyclists and spectators, to Porlock therefore parking and accommodation must all be considered in good time.

2027 – Currently looking into organising another Coleridge event probably linked with the Coleridge Way.

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

Doverhay Manor Committee (No update)

Local Community Network (No update)