PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT – Proposed Commemorative Shrub Planting Porlock Horticultural and Crafts Society

Date: 07 May 2026 **Author:** Clerk & RFO

Purpose of Report
To inform members of a request from the Porlock Horticultural and Crafts Society to plant a commemorative shrub to mark its 125th anniversary, and to seek Council approval in principle, subject to conditions.

Background
The Porlock Horticultural and Crafts Society is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2026 and has proposed marking the occasion by planting a shrub or small tree associated with the horticulturist Norman Haddon, who lived at West Porlock and was President of the Society from the late 1920s until 1971.

The Society has historic links with the Village Hall and initially enquired whether planting could take place within the Village Hall car park area. Following further correspondence, the Society has provided additional outline details to inform Council consideration.

Proposal Details
Based on the information supplied:

- Plant proposed: *Mahonia* × *media* 'Underway', a shrub with horticultural significance linked to Norman Haddon and recently awarded an RHS Award of Garden Merit.
    - The Society has advised that availability is not yet confirmed and that an alternative, locally or historically appropriate shrub may be selected if required.
- Indicative location: An area near the Wessex Water green box close to the exit door from the Small Hall at the Village Hall.
    - The Society has noted the need to avoid proximity to parking spaces and walkways due to prickly foliage.
- Timing: Planting proposed for autumn 2026, to minimise watering and maintenance requirements during establishment.
- Installation:
    - Ground preparation and planting to be undertaken by members of the Society's committee.
    - Intended to form part of a small ceremony or celebratory event, open to the Society's approximately 100 members.
- Materials and maintenance:
    - The Society would provide compost, mulch and associated materials.
    - No irrigation system proposed; the shrub is expected to be low-maintenance once established.

Health, Safety and Insurance
The Society has confirmed that, should the proposal proceed, it can provide:

- A risk assessment for the planting activity, and
- A copy of its public liability insurance certificate.

Ownership and Ongoing Responsibility
It has been made clear that, as the land is maintained by the Parish Council, the shrub would ultimately fall under Parish Council responsibility following planting, regardless of who undertakes the installation works.

Current Status

- No final decision on plant availability or exact siting has yet been made by the Society.
- The Society has requested that its proposal be presented to the May Parish Council meeting for consideration in principle.

Financial Implications

At this stage, the Society proposes to meet the costs associated with purchase and planting. No request for funding has been made.

Legal and Governance Considerations

- Council permission is required for planting on land under Parish Council control.
- Any approval should be conditional upon receipt and acceptance of an appropriate risk assessment and insurance documentation.
- Consideration should also be given to long-term maintenance and suitability of species for the location.

Recommendation

Resolve in principle the request from the Porlock Horticultural and Crafts Society to plant a commemorative shrub to mark its 125th anniversary, and delegate authority to the Clerk to work with the Society to finalise: the species selection, exact siting, planting method, and health and safety documentation, prior to any works taking place.