

CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th April 2026 at 7pm in the Church Rooms.

Present: Councillors A Hargraves (Chair), O Baker, A Ford, P Hodge, C Jackson and L Tully.

Locum Clerk: T. Jay

190/25 Public Forum Session.

A parishioner raised concerns about parking issues at The Orchard.

Vehicle speeding problems on the A371 were discussed.

191/25 To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received and approved from Councillor B Gudzelak.

192/25 To receive declarations of any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests from members regarding matters on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

193/25 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2026.

It was resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

194/25 To note that a code of conduct complaint submitted to Somerset Council regarding Councillor T Hargraves has been investigated and not upheld.

The result of the code of conduct complaint was noted.

195/25 To consider the procedure for the appointment of a new Parish Clerk, including the hours of work, salary to be offered and job description.

It was resolved to advertise the clerk position at a starting salary of £39,152 per annum (pro rata), paid at £20.29 per hour. The hours to be worked will be eight per week.

196/25 To note the amended Parish Council Asset Register.

The amended asset register was noted and agreed. This will be posted on the council website.

197/25 To consider the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The agenda will include the Chair's report; the Locum Clerk's financial report; working group reports; presentations from local organisations and a public question and answer session.

198/25 To note and receive comments on the minutes of the Croscombe Residents Meeting held on 15th March 2026.

The minutes were considered and noted.

Original to be ratified Approved by the Chair of the meeting

Date.....

199/25 To consider the engagement of a supplier to change the Parish Council's website domain and email addresses to gov.uk.

It was resolved in principle to change the website domain and email addresses to gov.uk. The Locum Clerk will obtain quotations from companies to be considered at the May Annual Parish Council meeting.

The Locum Clerk will also obtain quotations for a change of Parish Council website.

200/25 To note that all Parish Councillors must complete Data Protection training and give authority to the Locum Clerk to arrange this training.

The Locum Clerk was given authority to arrange this training.

201/25 To approve the updated Community Flood Plan.

It was resolved to approve the updated Community Flood Plan, which will be posted on the council website.

202/25 To consider the enhancement of the Orchard site.

Councillors considered suggestions for the enhancement of the Orchard site from the Orchard Working Group. Quotations will be obtained for the purchase of gabion cages to encourage wildlife habitat, and for hedgehog houses in the hedges. There would be no financial cost to the council as these items would be paid by working group funds.

203/25 To approve expenditure for future events to be held at the Orchard.

A picnic event is planned for Sunday the 12th of April, however this may have to be postponed in the event of inclement weather. The Orchard working group will be spending approximately £65 on this event. A suggestion was made that future events could be held to raise funds for a defibrillator to be situated at the Orchard.

204/25 To consider the arrangement for public conveniences to be provided at events held at the Orchard.

The Orchard working group are considering the purchase of a temporary composting toilet, to be situated in an awning tent which would be put up and taken down for events. It was agreed in principle that the group could spend up to £200 for this purchase.

205/25 To consider the location of the new noticeboard at the Orchard.

It was agreed that the new noticeboard will be situated between the existing gate and water trough.

206/25 To receive an update of the progress of the Emergency Plan initiative.

A progress report had previously been circulated to all councillors. A new emergency plan group will be established, and volunteers are required to join the group. This will be mentioned at the Annual Parish Meeting on April 20th.

207/25 To consider the renewal of the Cemetery field lease for animal grazing.

Approved by the Chair of the meeting Date.....

Professional advice will be required for a new lease to be drawn up as there has been a lot of legislation brought into place over a long period since the existing lease was agreed. Cooper and Tanner will be approached for advice on the way forward.

208/25 To consider the administration of WhatsApp groups used by Parish Councillors.
It was resolved that the council WhatsApp groups should be administered by the parish clerk. The job description for the new parish clerk will include this.

209/25 To receive an update on the Cemetery from Councillor A Ford.
Two borders will be dug for the planting of flower seeds. Arrangements have been made for the pile of rubble to be removed. A tidy up of the cemetery is planned. The two unused compost bins will be removed.

210/25 To receive an update of the purchase of new noticeboards from Councillor Gudzelak.
The new notice boards have been installed. Matt Little has carried out the installation work free of charge and is thanked for his generous efforts.

211/25 To consider the replacement of the fencing of the cemetery field.
It was resolved to replace a section of the fencing, with a budget limit of £650. A section of hedging will need to be cut back, but no bird nests will be disturbed during this work.

212/25 To approve expenditure of £148 for replacement defibrillator pads.
It was resolved to approve the expenditure of £148.

213/25 To receive and note Somerset Councillor Lovell's update report.
Councillor Lovell presented the report, which is contained as an appendix to the minutes.

214/25 To approve the following payments

Payee	Detail	Amount
Tony Jay	Locum Clerk's expenses 25.2.26 to 28.3.26 including the purchase of a £10 phone top up voucher.	£892.92
SALC	Annual membership fee	£303.55

215/25 To note any planning or enforcement matters.
A planning enforcement matter has been reported to Somerset Council.

216/25 To receive Working Group Updates
a) Croscombe Flood Group
See minute 201/25.

Approved by the Chair of the meeting Date.....

- b) Orchard Working Group.
See minutes 202, 203, 204 and 205/25.
- c) Play Area Working Group
There was nothing to report.

217/25 The date of the next Parish Council meeting was noted as Tuesday 5th May 2026 in the Church Rooms. This will be the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Appendix

Finance

Somerset Council says it is shifting from financial emergency to recovery after councillors approved the balanced 2026/27 budget. Leader Bill Revans told Full Council that independent reports show the authority has “grasped the challenges” and is on the right track after taking difficult decisions while protecting frontline services and vulnerable residents.

The council highlighted progress in narrowing its funding gap from £101m in March 2025 to £25m in February 2026, despite the Government’s Fair Funding Review hitting rural counties. Councillors agreed a 4.99% Council Tax rise, taking the average Band D bill to £1,950.30 a year (about £1.78 extra per week), still below many neighbouring unitary councils.

To close the remaining gap, the council will use one further year of Exceptional Financial Support via a Capitalisation Direction while seeking further savings through transformation. The Inspiring Innovation Transformation Programme will invest £45m by 2031, targeting roughly £135m in savings (a 3:1 return). Plans also include up to £5m more over three years to smarten up road signs and lines, to clear more gullies, pavements and cycleways, plus an extra £2m for the Exceptional Hardship Fund. The council said it will sell assets where needed to protect services and countered claims it sought an 11% tax rise as a misrepresentation of government negotiations.

Highways

Somerset Council to spend up to £5m over 3 years to smarten roads, pavements and cycleways — more drain and gully clearance, improved signs and road markings, litter collection and vegetation clearance near walking/cycling routes.

Current road maintenance programmes focus on safety critical works which can mean lower priority issues like faded road markings, broken signs and overgrown hedges have been left.

Improvements will also be made to the council’s public reporting system, to make it even easier for residents to highlight any issues on the roads.

We will continue to prioritise pothole repairs and are working hard to clear the backlog caused by the many weeks of wet weather and flooding we have experienced this winter. We plan to allocate additional funds to tackle the backlog of potholes if we need to.”

Since January the council has received 16,332 defect reports (4,417 in the same period last year). As of 20 Feb, 35 teams have fixed 4,577 potholes. Repairs are prioritised by severity and will be completed within 2 hours, 24 hours, 7 days or 28 days depending on the category.

Education

The government’s SEND reform proposals (12-week consultation) set out a shift towards supporting more pupils in mainstream schools, rebalancing the EHCP system, strengthening

Approved by the Chair of the meeting Date.....

prevention and early intervention, and reworking funding and tribunal arrangements. Somerset Council welcomes the direction but warns major challenges remain — rising independent placement costs, SEND transport pressures in rural areas, and the need for sufficient, fairly distributed funding during the transition.

Key points:

- More support in mainstream: Somerset plans 250+ new SEN unit places over 3 years to teach more children closer to home.
- EHCP rebalancing: aim to reserve EHCPs for those most in need and reduce costly plan maintenance. Somerset currently has 1,000+ EHCPs awaiting completion; demand up 47% in five years.
- Tribunals and funding: proposals seek to rebalance tribunal powers and funding responsibilities; councils remain concerned about historic cost pressures.
- Private placement costs: independent special school spending is rising (budget £35m vs forecast £42m); some providers show high profit margins.
- Prevention and early intervention: increased support proposed from early years onward.
- SEND transport: ongoing cost pressures for rural areas like Somerset (projected spend c. £15m this year).
- Council role: schools to carry more per-pupil costs, while councils continue to commission specialist services and curate local offers.
- Timescales and funding: proposals include staged change; Somerset stresses the announced investment must be sufficient and fairly allocated, and calls for financial bridging support during transition.

Libraries

Families can donate and swap pre-loved World Book Day costumes at participating libraries from half term ahead of World Book Day on 5 March. Donate a clean, good-quality costume, browse the costume rail and take an outfit free of charge — no donation required.

This Costume Swap makes a big difference — helping parents save money, reducing waste and bringing more people into our welcoming library spaces.

Participating libraries include: Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet and Street. For details visit your local branch, follow [@SomersetLibrariesUK](#) or email librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk

Local Community Network (LCN)

The next meeting of the Shepton Local Community Network (LCN) will be Monday 27th April, venue to be confirmed. The Highways Working Group will meet at Shape Committee Room on Tuesday 14th April 2-4 p.m., with Highways Officers present. With announcements of much needed road safety improvements at A361 south of Frome and the B3139/B3135 Slab house Junction we need to put pressure on for similar improvements at Beacon Hill Crossroads.

I thank the Croscombe Parish Council Chair for regular attendance at LCN meetings.

Links

Approved by the Chair of the meeting Date.....

Visit - Report a Problem on the Road: - A list of all reporting pages to do with roads, pavements, lighting:

Report a problem on the road

Potholes and road damage - Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

Potholes, road damage and edge loss

Report a problem with a street light - We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

Report a problem with a street light

Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting - Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate or a new road sign:
Road signs, bollards and road markings

Speed limits - Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

Speed limits

Traffic lights -We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the County:

Traffic lights

Street and roadworks - We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset:

Street and roadworks problems

Traffic - updates and roadworks follow:

Travel Somerset on X and Travel Somerset on Facebook.

All ongoing roadworks - available on the Somerset Council website interactive map

Roadworks and travel information

Somerset Waste - collection days, replacement bins or recycling bags and missed collection reporting:

Bins, recycling and waste

Travel and Tourist Information

Travel Somerset - Art, Culture, Events, History & More

Sign-up for the latest climate news from across Somerset:

Climate newsletter sign-up

Open Somerset Council Consultations - which anyone can complete and take part in shaping the future of Somerset

Somerset Council - Citizen Space - Consultations

End of minutes.

Approved by the Chair of the meeting Date.....