

CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 7pm in the Church Rooms.

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

Locum Clerk: T. Jay

1/26 Public Forum Session

No member of the public spoke.

2/26 To consider the election of the Chairman of the Council to serve until May 2027 and receive their declaration of office.

It was resolved to elect Councillor Hargraves as Chairman.

3/26 To consider the election of the Vice Chairman of the Council to serve until May 2027 and receive their declaration of office.

It was resolved to elect Councillor Baker as Vice Chairman.

4/26 To receive apologies for absence.

The absence of Councillor Gudzelak was noted.

5/26 To receive declarations of any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests from members regarding matters on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

6/26 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7th April 2026.

It was resolved to approve the minutes.

7/26 To note the resignation of two Parish Councillors since the last meeting.

The resignations were noted.

8/26 To receive and note the internal audit report.

The internal audit report was received and noted.

9/26 To consider actions to be taken as detailed in the internal audit report for 2025-26.

It was resolved that the actions to be taken would be carried out by Councillors and the new Parish Clerk, when appointed.

Original to be ratified Approved by the Chair of the meeting

Date.....

- 10/26 To appoint an internal auditor for the 2026-27 financial year.
- It was resolved to change auditors for the 2026-27 financial year. The appointment of a new auditor will be an agenda item at the June meeting.
- 11/26 To approve the Certificate of Exemption on the Annual Governance Statement 2025-2026
- It was resolved to approve the Certificate of Exemption which was signed by the Chairman and the Locum Responsible Financial Officer.
- 12/26 To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025 - 2026.
- It was resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement which was signed by the Chairman and the Locum Parish Clerk.
- 13/26 To approve the Annual Accounting Statements 2025 - 2026.
- It was resolved to approve the Annual Accounting Statement which was signed by the Chairman and the Locum Parish Clerk.
- 14/26 To appoint the members of the Staffing Committee.
- It was resolved to appoint Councillors Baker, Ford and Jackson as members of the Staffing Committee. The Chairman will be an ex-officio member.
- 15/26 To approve the confirmation of the dates for the period for the exercise of public rights as being 3rd June to 14th July 2026.
- It was resolved to approve the dates for the period for the exercise of public rights as being 3rd June to 14th July 2026.
- 16/26 To consider the instructions of the Internal Auditor that council working groups should only operate on a temporary basis to deal with short term projects, and not to be permanent groups.
- The following resolutions were passed:
- Councillor Jackson will be appointed to the council Flood Working Group and as the only councillor on the working group will be the working group leader. The working group will continue to operate as present to complete ongoing projects which involve parish council funds. Following this, the structure and operation of the working group will be considered.
- Councillor Baker will be appointed to the council Orchard Working Group and as the only councillor on the working group will be the working group leader. The working group will continue to operate as present to complete the current planting

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project. Following this, the structure and operation of the working group will be considered.

The structure and operation of the Playground Working group will be considered at a future meeting when Councillor Gudzelak is present.

17/26 To approve the change of Parish Council website domain and email addresses to gov.uk and to appoint a company to make these changes.

It was resolved to appoint Parish Council Websites to manage the migration of the council website domain and email addresses to gov.uk and to administer these in the future.

18/26 To consider changing the Parish Council website provider.

It was resolved to adjourn this decision until after the new parish clerk is appointed.

19/26 To consider the Parish Council's biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021.

It was resolved to adopt a biodiversity plan, which will be published on the parish council website.

20/26 To receive an update on the Cemetery from Councillor A Ford.

The new fencing work will be carried out in mid-May which will make the field stock proof.

21/26 To receive and note Somerset Councillor Lovell's update report.

The report is contained as an appendix at the end of the minutes.

22/26 To approve the following payments

Payee	Detail	Amount
Tony Jay	Locum Clerk's expenses	£1436.52
Harris and Harris	Professional charges	£778.20
ALCA	Advertising of Clerk vacancy	£50.00
Do the Numbers	Internal Audit fee	£190.00
SALC	Annual membership of SALC and NALC	£303.55
ICCM	Annual membership fee	£110.00
MedUK	Replacement defibrillator pads	£123.33
ALCA	Councillor training	£196.00

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Harris and Harris	Funds to be held on account for future legal work	£1737.80
Michael Rogers	Refund for the purchase of a portable toilet for use at the Orchard	£179.89

It was resolved to approve the payments. The list includes invoices received after the meeting agenda had been published.

- 23/26 To note any planning or enforcement matters.
- 24/26 To receive Working Group Updates
 - a) Croscombe Flood Group
 - b) Orchard Working Group
 - c) Play Area Working Group
- 25/26 To note the date of the next Parish Council meeting as Monday 1st June 2026 in the Foyle Room at the Village Hall.

Appendix - Somerset Councillor Lovell's update report.

I provide a retrospect on 2025-2026

Finance

The funding gap has been cut from £101m (March 2025) to £25m (February 2026). This is a significant turnaround in just 12 months.

The Government has approved £30m Exceptional Financial Support, £25m to close the gap, £5m for service transformation.

A 4.99% Council Tax rise was confirmed at Full Council on 4 March 2026. Somerset's rate remains lower than Wiltshire, Dorset and Cornwall.

Around 66% of Council Tax funds are in Social Care and Children's Services, where demand and costs continue to rise. Over 60% of residents consulted backed an increase to protect essential services. Somerset has balanced its budget every year since formation in 2023, despite a 40% reduction in Government funding to local authorities in recent years.

Investments of £15.3m are projected to deliver £31m–£57m in savings by 2030/31.

A residents' survey in December 2025 with 1,400+ responses said

- 62% backed a council tax rise to protect services
- 86% want the council to lobby central government for more funding
- Top priority: roads and pavements (55%), then crime (29%), public transport and schools (28% each)
- 83% opposed cuts to road maintenance; 68% opposed cuts to waste services.

Highways

Somerset has had 16,332 defect reports since January 2026, nearly four times last year's figure, driven by the exceptionally wet winter. As of February, Somerset teams had fixed 4,577 potholes. The number of teams fixing potholes has increased to 35 as of 20th February. There is up to £5m new investment over 3 years for smarter roads with more gully clearance, improved signs and markings, and better public reporting.

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Somerset holds Green ratings from the DfT for both road condition and preventative maintenance — one of the best-performing councils in the South West.

Please report any defects: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/> or call 0300 123 2224 (urgent/out of hours)

Somerset Council has awarded a £730,000 grant to Greenways and Cycleroles to deliver sections of the Strawberry Line (Shepton Mallet to Yatton via Wells and Cheddar) and Somerset Circle (a 76-mile mostly traffic-free circular route linking Somerset to Bristol and Bath). This includes:

- Off-road, flat route following the former Cheddar Valley railway — suitable for cycling, walking, wheeling and mobility vehicles
- Boosts local tourism, reduces car use, improves connections between rural communities
- Delivered using volunteers and local contractors — exceptional value for money
- A Green Lanes consultation
- Somerset Council consulting on trial changes at five rural/edge-of-residential routes to improve access for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and wheeling users
- Trials would be followed by further consultation before any permanent changes; nearby residents and businesses will be notified by letter
- Key consultation locations:
 - Burcott Lane, Wells: South of a 47-home development
 - Comeytrove Road, Taunton: Near Lloyd Close, connecting to Galmington Stream
 - Neville's Batch (Highcroft Lane), Gurney Slade
 - Downend Road, Puriton: North of A39 near Dunball roundabout
 - Touches Lane, Chard: Near Chard Reservoir and the household recycling centre

Somerset has secured a Government Bus Service Fund award of £11.4m capital and £13.1m revenue to improve local bus services to 2029. Plans include expanded Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT), better bus to rail links, and improved connections to employment and health services — benefiting rural communities across Somerset

Planning

54 zero-carbon council homes have opened in Minehead, including 33 flats.

This is the first council housing scheme in West Somerset for a generation; all let to local people under a local lettings policy

A £15m refurbishment of Octagon Theatre Yeovil has been approved

- Planning permission granted for major overhaul of the 50-year-old theatre
- Works include: accessibility upgrades, backstage and front-of-house improvements, energy efficiency measures, new Changing Places facility, upgraded stage systems
- Funding: £10m from DCMS, £3.75m from Yeovil Town Council (loan and reserves), £1.25m+ from ticket levy, fundraising and Section 106 via Somerset Council
- Tender process now under way; work expected to start in 2026/27.

Schools

Somerset is planning 250+ new SEN unit places over 3 years to teach more children closer to home.

Current pressures include 1,000+ EHCPs awaiting completion; demand up 47% in five years; independent special school spending running at £42m vs £35m budget.

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Care

Somerset Council's award-winning 'My Life, My Future' programme has transformed adult social care, delivering £10m in savings between 2022/23 and 2024/25, with a further £3.7m projected for 2025/26. The programme focuses on supporting, enabling and maintaining people's independence — helping the Council avoid unnecessary long-term care costs while providing support to more residents. It won the health and social care category at the LGC Awards 2025. Somerset Council is now refreshing its Adult Social Care Strategy for 2026–2029 and encouraging residents, unpaid carers and organisations to share their views to shape future services.

Recycling

From end of March 2026 there will be expanded communal recycling collections for 13,000 households in flats

New collections include: plastic bottles, pots/tubs/trays, tins/cans/foil, glass, cartons, food waste and plastic bags/wrappers

This is funded by the Government's Simpler Recycling programme.

Local Community Network (LCN)

The next meeting of the Shepton Local Community Network (LCN) will be Monday 27th April at Shape Council Chamber Shepton Mallet. The Highways Working Group meet at Shape Committee Room on Tuesday 14th April 2-4 p.m., with a Highways Officers present online.

Links

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](#)

End of minutes.