

Combe Florey Parish Council

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 05th May 2026 7:00 pm At Combe Florey Village Hall	Written by: Gemma Coombes
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Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**Councillors Present**

Cllr Robin Cleverly (Chairman)
Cllr Jacquey Newton
Cllr Neil Truby (RFO)
Cllr John Passingham
Cllr Jan Collino

In attendance

Parishioners x 13
Cllr Mike Rigby from Somerset County Council

2025/1) Welcome by chairman

The Chairman opened at the meeting at 19:07 and welcomed the parishioners in attendance; introduced the councillors and explained the purpose of the meeting.

2025/2) Apologies for absence

Apologies for lateness: Gemma Coombes, Mike Rigby.
Apologies for absence: None

2025/3) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from the 13th May 2025 were taken as read. No objections to adopting the minutes. Proposed: Jacquey Newton, Seconded: John Passingham. Signed by the Chairman.

2025/4) Chairman's Report

Cllr Cleverly read out his report.

The past year has been relatively quiet for the council, with most matters proceeding as business as usual. There have been a few changes in the council since last year. Jana Truby was replaced by Giannina Lloyd-Jones, who was then replaced by Jan Collino. I would like to thank Jana and Giannina, and all the current councillors for their work and commitment to the parish.

Over the course of the year, the council considered eight planning applications; all but one were supported. While three involved minor works, there were two more significant proposals. At Greenacres Farm the original proposal for 5 new homes as barn conversions has been modified to a complete redevelopment of the site. The parish council supported this as an improved scheme, and the county council approved it. An application to build a barn on the same property has been rejected.

The other major application was for a new dwelling adjacent to Capes on Tower Lane. At a public meeting held to discuss this, most parishioners objected, and the parish council did not support the proposal. The county council has yet to decide on this.

Progress continues the village garden, which is beginning to take shape and look very attractive. It's been a slow process but is starting to look tidy and be used by residents and visitors.

At the parish meeting last year, we discussed the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. As you may know, CIL is collected from new developments and must be spent within five years on infrastructure or services that are directly needed because of those developments. At the time we were anticipating about an extra £40,000 from the new developments comprising 11 new houses in total from the developments at Greenacres and Hawkins Barton. We have been told however, surprisingly, that at least the ones at Greenacres are not liable for CIL money as the total areal footprint of development has not changed, despite replacing storage barns with dwellings. As Neil will detail the available CIL funds have now been expended on various projects.

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Signed: [Chairman]

In closing, I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council and our Clerk for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

2025/5) Financial Report

Cllr N Truby the Responsible Financial Officer gave a brief report. The precept was £4,000. The largest regular items of expenditure are wages and other administrative expenses; the village lengthsman ; village garden maintenance, and Insurance.

On regular expenses the Parish Council recorded a very small deficit of less £50 over the year. £2,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money was put towards a defibrillator at the Farmer's Arms.

A further £2,650 has been committed towards new railings for the Village Burial Ground but not yet paid. Once paid, all the past CIL money will have been used.

An independent review of the accounts to 31st March 2026 is underway.

2025/6) Somerset Council report (Cllr Mike Rigby)

Cllr Rigby outlined the key facts for the County Council for the year and what could be coming for the forthcoming year. Key points made:

- Somerset Council are now through the financial emergency that was declared 2.5 years ago.
- Adult social care is a large factor with child social care having an impact as well.
- 1000 statutory responsibilities are the responsibility of the County Council, social care has tightly defined requirements, highways are also covered but less clearly defined.
- There is a multi-year settlement with government now so planning can take place further ahead
- There is a temporary finance director in place but getting a permanent finance director is difficult
- Unitary council have currently 1100 planning applications on the book and are hoping to reduced this down to 900. Planning enforcement is an issue.

Questions from the floor:

- 70% is spent on social care. Is there any political party that is trying to change this? The Liberal Democrats are looking to stop paying for care out of local tax - it must come from central tax. If you feel inclined, you can write to your MP to lobby them on this matter.
- A358 is very fast, how are we getting the speed monitored? There are regular accidents, but no action is being taken. Lots of people will not allow accidents to be reported or for the police to be called. SID devices can record speeds and volume of traffic, this is not provided by the Somerset Council, this must be provided by the Parish Council. There are stretches on the A358 that are being proposed for reduced limits. The SID devices cost approx. £2000 per device; Somerset Council will guide the Parish Council on what to do. Police enforcement can also be engaged to ask for support.
- In 2022 the WSR wall fell into a property and the insurance claim is still outstanding, Somerset Council claimed against the farmer to court, and the letter was not sufficient proof to reduce the insurance. Can a letter come from the Council to suggest this is not climate change. Cllr Rigby will help as he can.
- Some houses in the parish have not been included in the scheme for high-speed internet. Cllr Rigby said they are working on broadband voucher scheme but as there are only 10 houses left affected this will not be enough to attract a partner to work with.
- Footpath diversion, there is a 50-metre stretch where you must walk along the B3224 road. The plan is to move the footpath on the far side to avoid this. Cllr Rigby will provide an update. The farmer has once again ploughed up the footpath.
- Has there been any significant movement on joining the main railway from Taunton to Minehead? There is some work going on to consider options and there needs to be upgrade work on the line at Norton. This would link Bishop Lydeard to Taunton and WSR would link Minehead to Bishop Lydeard. There could be a park and ride at Bishop Lydeard and this could then make it an 11 mins trip into central Taunton.

2025/7) Policing Report

The Police Community Support Officer did not attend the meeting nor provide a report.

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Signed: [Chairman]

2025/8) Report from local groups

1. Parochial Church Council

Cindy Bottard, Churchwarden read out a report. The Benefice has been in interregnum during 2025 and into 2026. The post of Rector continues to be advertised, and various discussions have taken place with Archdeacon, Simon Hill, and with Bishop Michael when he came to lead a Service of Evensong during September 2025. There has been some talk of re-configuring the parishes of the Benefice, but nothing definite has been decided yet. The church continues to offer services and remains open daily during daylight hours. Many thanks go to the few people who are key holders and open and close the church daily. Revd. Martin Perry and Revd. Maureen Young, retired vicars, have enabled us to continue to offer at least two services a month at Combe Florey Church. Routinely we hold one service of Holy Communion on the second Sunday of the month and a service of Morning Prayer on the fourth Sunday of the month. There have been three services of Evensong during the past year, and a Benefice service was held to celebrate our Patronal day at the end of June. The next Benefice Service at Combe Florey will be on Sunday May 31 at 10.30am and an extra Benefice service on Thursday, May 14th at 12 noon will be held to celebrate Ascension Day.

There was also a look back at the events of 2025 which included Lent, Easter, Patronal, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas.

2. Village hall

Phillip Greenway read out a report for the period of 2025, a busy year with the hall being regularly used by several groups. The committee is made up by several local residents. The quiz night is a regular event along with spring plant sale, a bookmart is held monthly and has provided a good social event over the last 12 years.

Cleaning is now done every 4 weeks, there is new led lighting and new doors.

Plans for 2026: Rebuild the new stone wall at bottom of steps, internal windows to be repainted, work to update the car park area, in process of updating the trust deed and make it more modern, changing to a CIO to preserve the future of the hall, there are several people helping in the village.

3. Combe Florey Defibrillator group

Jean Phillips provided an update; there are 6 members of the group. The third Defibrillator is now installed at the Farmers' Arms. This is with the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance with a supported package that cost £100 per year. The other two are still with the southwest ambulance service and are rented. Thanks to the hosts of the Defibrillators. The Trebles Holford machine has been used; the pads were replaced and it was back up and running within 24 hours.

Fund raising continues, this year the money will be split with the cardiology department. Updates are available via community email community update letter.

2025/9) Public Forum, discussion and general questions: Establish PC's priorities for forthcoming year.

The Chairman invited those present to express any other issues and priorities they would suggest for the forthcoming year:

- Speed indicator device
- Could a WhatsApp group be created? There would need to be a moderator. Cllr Truby is happy to investigate this. There are currently active groups in Treble's Holford and Nethercott.
- The exit at Treble's Holford is very dangerous and you must emerge parallel to the road and use your mirror to see. Is there anything that can be done?

At the May 2025 Annual Parish Meeting, parishioners suggested the ideas for use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and raised other issues that could be looked at. This is what was reported back at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting:

You asked	CFPC responds
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An extension to the burial ground or burial area of the churchyard.	This would depend upon the potential purchase of land from the farmer behind the cemetery and therefore deemed very challenging as there is a time limit to use the funds, namely 5 years.
A feasibility study into a footpath close to the A358 from the West Bagborough turn (campsite and holiday cottages) to the Farmer's Arms, as holidaymakers are endangering themselves and others by walking along the A road.	From information about a neighbouring parish's feasibility study this would be more costly than the funds we have available. The creation of a footpath from the campsite to the Farmers Arms would not benefit the whole community.
Improvements to the state of Honeyball Lane, including deterrence of and barriers to the deer.	The responsibility lies with the landowners on either side of the lane, one has taken some measures, and the farmer has not taken any measures.
A bus shelter for the use of the young people who are collected from the Village Hall car park by school and college buses.	Deemed to be for a very small proportion of the Parish Community therefore did not Parish Council did not move forward with suggestion.
Improvement to the bus shelter on the A358 near the easterly part of Combe Florey.	Uncertainty as to how to improve the bus shelter, as it cannot be moved closer to the road due to visibility constraints of vehicles.
Repair the bent rail on the bridge by the easterly entrance to Combe Florey from the A358.	The rail was repaired at no cost to the Parish Council.
New railings for the existing burial ground.	Parish Council Contributed £2,650 towards the cost
3 rd Defibrillator at Farmers Arms	Parish Council contributed £2,000 to CFDG for this purpose.
Churchyard single gate to the West and double gates to the East are in a poor state of repair.	The Parochial Church Council have resolved this.
Rubbish bins in the village / and or dog waste bins	Last requested and investigated two years ago but no vote taken. Perhaps this could be looked at again through this next year.
Address the overhaul/replacement of reflective bollards on the A358 near the West Bagborough turning.	Would be an issue for either Somerset Council or Highways Agency to provide.
Concern - increased volume of traffic that drives through Combe Florey, and the speed at which some of it travels. Noted that the proposed new development of 5 homes at Hawkins Barton will add to the volume.	At 2026 APM Councillor Mike Rigby suggested the use of SIDS (Speed Indicator Device) speed monitoring device, which would have an approx. cost of £3000 or so. It could be moveable around to a variety of places.
Concern - rising spring close to the grass verge at the front of the Church. A new salt bin for this location or capturing the water and piping it to the drain could be considered.	John Passingham has made his best efforts at diverting the spring so that some of it will flow into the existing drain from the road. The drain is too high for piping the water directly into the drain.
Concern - improve the safety of the turning onto the A358 close to the Farmer's Arms - views along the main road are heavily obscured in both directions that is a potentially lethal junction.	Somerset Council have made some amendments over the last few years.

In addition to the above for 2025:

- Cllr Passingham, thanks to Mark Perry for his help in replacing the posts at either end of the village.

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- Cllr Passingham, thanks to James Dennehey for his help in the repair to the bent rail on the bridge by the easterly entrance to Combe Florey
- Mark Perry has been ill but is now back in action

2025/10) NEXT MEETING:

Annual Parish Council Meeting 26th May 2026 @ Combe Florey Village Hall. Time 6.00 pm

Meeting closed at 20.33

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Signed: [Chairman]