



Minutes of meeting of Cotford St Luke Parish Council held on **Thursday 20th November 2025 at 7pm.**

Present: Cllr Draper- Gammon, Cllr Freeman, Cllr McCrea, Cllr Harrison and Cllr Barter

In attendance: 5 members of the public and Helen McGladdery - Clerk and RFO

“Have Your Say”

One resident asked questions about the proposed cutting of the Laurel Hedge by the Chapel, he was in support but other residents have objected.

Action: The PC is carrying out further consultation before proceeding.

Barrie Childs - Somerset Bus Partnership gave a presentation to Councillors. He advised at present there are 170 buses that run to and from Taunton each week, many underused. He made a plea for more use to stop them from being removed.

Action: The PC will help advertise the service through the Website/Social media and add paper copies of the timetables to local cafes/organisations

Kyle Gordon - Taunton LCN Chair introduced himself and welcomed any feedback/ideas the PC has to offer

Meeting starts: 7.20pm

181/25 Co-option of new Councillor to fill vacancy

Resolved: Jonathan Barter was co-opted and the relevant paperwork was completed

Action: The Clerk to forward the paperwork to SC electoral services

182/25 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Cllr Birch - Personal reasons

PCSO Henderson

Somerset Cllr Rigby

Somerset Cllr Sully

183/25 To receive declarations of pecuniary or personal interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations.

None

184/25 To approve the draft minutes of:

The Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 18th September 2025

The draft minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

185/25 To receive reports from:

a. Somerset Councillors.

Cllr Sully and Rigby had forwarded their local newsletter to Councillors ahead of the meeting

b. Police report

The police report was distributed to Councillors and detailed 4 police reports for Cotford St Luke for the month of October 2025. These calls involved: 1 Public order, 1 Assault, 1 Theft and 1 Domestic incident

186/25 Community Association

a. To receive report from Trustees

The treasurer of the CA was present and gave a verbal update, detailing the poor financial position of the CA and the lack of usage from parishioners. In the current situation the CA will very soon not be financially viable. There is a lack of trustees, which limits the amount of activities that can be put on for the village. The fees have been increased so they are in line with other halls.

Actions:

1. The PC to assist with advertising the hall through its website and social media
2. The Clerk to keep pursuing SC to reimburse charges owed to CA

b. To discuss implications of the Primary School joining the Richard Huish Trust

A consultation is currently taking place, as the primary school wishes to join the Richard Huish Trust from September 2026. The PC has made enquiries and the Richard Huish Trust advised they wish to work with the CA to keep things running the way they are at the moment, and offered a meeting to discuss.

Action: The Clerk to schedule a meeting

c. To discuss the current lease relating to responsibility for payments and agree to financially support the Community Association by Parish Council fulfilling its Obligations

The lease is very unclear, who is responsible for the utility bills at the CA. The Clerk is continuing to pursue SC for clarification. Given the vulnerable position of the CA, Councillors decided to review a permanent financial contribution to the CA in its 2026/27 budget, which will be agreed in January 2026.

Resolved: Councillors agreed to grant £4,500 from the unspent grant budget to the CA immediately, to enable the CA to continue operating.

Actions:

1. The Treasurer of CA to send most recent bank statement to Clerk to confirm bank details
2. The Clerk to make the payment

187/25 Clerks Report which will include all matters arising from previous minutes, correspondence received and items of interest

- Minutes added to website
- Payments scheduled
- S106 application submitted and rejected by SC, as they have now advised it has to be just for allotments
- Pleas for volunteers added to Facebook and Website
- Street names submitted to SC developer confirmed they will use the PC suggested names
- No climbing signs now installed at the tennis court

- Leaf blower purchased
- Met with SC regarding responsibilities and land/trees within the village (update in 191/25)
- SC and Parkers instructed and some tree work carried out (update in 191/25)
- Chased Cannington college about tree work, response now received (item 191/25)
- Flood defence survey forwarded to Councillors
- Ditch clearance work instructed
- Riparian responsibility letters sent to residents

Correspondence received:

1. Loose drain cover
2. Trees Graham Way
3. Tree Nichol Place
4. Tree 888 (per tree report)
5. Five emails relating to riparian responsibility

Update on volunteers

I have added posts to both the PC and Village Facebook pages and re-shared. I have received offers of help from 5 volunteers.

188/25 Finance

a. Details of Receipts and Payment since the previous meeting

Receipts

Reserves Acc interest	£685.57
CIL Acc interest	£82.19
HMRC VAT refund	£5,798.97

Payments:

Community Association Grant	£500.00
Quantock entertainment - Fete	£120.00
Parsons - August	£1,639.76
HMRC - Sept	£368.46
SC Pensions -Sept	£341.64
H McGladdery - Sept Expenses	£113.49
Rheos Final (flood survey)	£3,500.00
Bank service charge	£6.00
Mobile phone - October	£9.04
Carly Press tennis court signs	£404.40
Parkers - trees 882 & 883	£842.40
Parsons - September	£1,639.76
PKF - Audit	£378.00
Somerset Council - Quarter 2 services	£1,672.34
HMRC - October	£315.49
SC Pensions - October	£306.37
H McGladdery Oct Expenses	£11.24
Service charge	£6.00
The Clerks September and October salary was paid in this period	

b. Details of invoices for approval

Parsons – October	£1639.76
SALC Cllr Essentials 2 training	£25.00

H McGladdery – Poppy Wreath	£25.00
Complete weed control (2 applications)	£1,694.40
Jill Larcombe - Internal Audit	£65.00

- c. **To receive budget to spend report** - attached
- d. **To receive the half yearly statement** - attached

e. To receive the internal audit report

The internal audit report was approved by Councillors and showed no matters of non-compliance

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

f. To receive the conclusion of Audit

The conclusion of audit was approved by Councillors, but a query raised over the auditors comments relating to exercise of public rights.

Actions:

1. The Clerk will seek clarification from PKF
2. The Clerk to add to the website

g. To approve the purchase of a new laptop for the Clerk

Resolved: A budget of up to £1000 was set for the Clerk to purchase a new laptop

Action: The Clerk to arrange the purchase

h. To receive the first draft of 2026/27 budget - attached

Councillors agreed to look at the budget in more detail in January

Actions:

1. Councillors to send any suggestions for inclusion in the budget to the Clerk by 31st December
2. The Clerk to set up a budget setting meeting in January to discuss options.

i. To approve the purchase of a new entrance sign for the Community Centre

Councillors agreed to purchase a new sign for over the door, and to investigate a directional sign for the roundabout.

Resolved: A budget of £500 was set for the signs

Action: The Clerk to contact Carly Press for a quote and proceed the order

189/25 Planning Applications:

- a. **To agree response to planning applications received** – none at time of setting agenda

- b. **To receive report from Lovell open day**

Over 50 people attended the open day and the development was received positively by all that attended. The Clerk has received a report of run off from the site into Heals Meadow - this has been reported to the site manager.

Action: The Clerk to add the emergency contact number for the site to social media

190/25 Amenities and assets:

- a. **To discuss additional safety measures for the tennis court**

Councillors agreed no further measures were required at present

- b. **To approve the Tennis Court/MUGA/Exercise equipment risk assessment**

Resolved: The risk assessment was approved by Councillors

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

c. To approve the Clerk carrying out land registry searches in the Parish

Resolved: A budget of £200 was set for the Clerk to carry out land registry searches of the open spaces in the parish

Action: The Clerk to carry out the searches

d. To receive update on Somerset Council's areas of responsibility

Broken play equipment has now been removed from the playing field and dog bins now replaced

e. To discuss Litter picking/street cleaning in the parish

Councillors agreed not to set up a Parish Council litter picking group and Cllr Harrison will contact local residents and advise if they wish to set up their own group this would be independent from the PC

Action: Cllr Harrison to contact local resident who expressed a wish to carry out litter picking

191/25 Trees, flood defences and Crown Land

a. Update on tree works in the Parish and to approve any additional works required

Tree works carried out - The required works have been completed on trees 882 and 883.

Tree works pending - TPO planning applications have been submitted for trees 888, 885 and 869 to enable the PC to instruct a contractor to carry out the work. Further information is required and this is being sought from the company who carried out the tree survey. Testing is also being carried out on tree 888, as concerns were raised of fungus growth.

Action: The Clerk to progress the applications once information received

Cannington college had previously agreed to carry out some tree works in the parish FOC, to train their students. Unfortunately they have informed the PC that the students aren't ready to complete the work. Therefore a quote was requested from Parkers Tree care and Somerset Council to carry out these works.

Resolved: £2,640 was approved to carry out this work.

Action: The Clerk will await the quote from SC and instruct the contractor with the most competitive price.

Floodplain - The PC was awarded a grant of £15,000 from the SRA to carry out specific tasks on the flood plain and ditch network. The PC instructs the contractors and reclaims the money. £6,000 was included in the grant to reinstate the dry ditch. Following the flood survey from Rheos Environmental, the recommendation was not to reinstate the ditch as this is not viable. One recommendation in the report was to get the open grass areas cut back to remove tree saplings and major growth across the floodplain, so the floodplain can work effectively. A quote has been received from Parsons Landscapes to carry out this work. The quote also includes excavating 4 oak saplings and planting them on the main playing field. SC has approved this and the PC would take on liability once planted.

Resolved:

1. The Clerk will request the SRA reallocate £6000 from the grant to cut back the major growth on the open areas of the flood plain
2. If the SRA denies the request the PC will fund the essential work to maintain the floodplain from earmarked reserves at a cost of £4,250 + VAT
3. All other flood plain work approved and will be claimed back from SRA

4. Councillors agreed to fund the excavation and re-planting of the 4 oak saplings at a cost of £463+VAT

Actions:

1. The Clerk to contact SRA to request reallocation of funds
2. Clerk to meet with SC to agree tree planting locations on the playing field
3. The Clerk to instruct Parsons Landscapes to carry out all the work in the floodplain quote

b. Update on setting up a working group to assist with flood defence survey recommendations/actions

A request for volunteers was added to Facebook and website, and some other residents have volunteered.

Action: Cllr Draper- Gammon to contact residents who've expressed interest

c. Update on meeting with Somerset Council to discuss Crown Land trees

The Clerk and Chair met with Jonatahan Stevens - SC Head of operations to discuss the Crown land issues in Cotford St Luke. He advised CSL is the only parish in Somerset in this unique position. The PC advised they already fund the cutting of the verges and other crown grass areas, but need support from SC relating to the vast amount of trees and the management required. JS advised he will firstly speak to the SC legal department to determine any implications for SC or PC carrying out any works. Then discussions will take place to see how SC can support the PC.

d. To adopt the Crown land tree policy

Resolved: The Amended tree policy was approved

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

e. To receive update on Somerset Wildlife Trust meeting

Cllr Harrison attended the meeting and gave a verbal update. She will carry out some research on potential projects for the village and feedback to a future meeting.

Actions:

1. The Clerk to add a future agenda item
2. Cllr Harrison to seek additional information

f. To discuss plan to manage Himalayan Balsam

Cllr Harrison attended the last LCN meeting where there was a presentation on the management of Himalayan Balsam. It is classed as an invasive species and needs careful management.

Actions:

1. The Clerk to add a future agenda item regarding removal logistics
2. Cllr Harrison to seek additional information and timings for removal etc.
3. The Clerk to contact Norton Fitzwarren PC regarding potentially collaborating with them

192/25 Youth Shelter -

a. To receive updated costs to remove the shelter and make area safe

Cllr McCrea met with Trevor Parsons to discuss making the area safe if the shelter was removed. A quote for the work has not yet been received so deferred until the next meeting.

b. To agree next steps to consult residents

Deferred until quotes received

193/25 Items from Councillors for inclusion in the next meeting.

- Earmarked reserves
- Budget 2026/27
- Precept request
- SWT initiatives
- Himalayan Balsam
- Youth Shelter
- Flood working party

194/25 Next meeting: Parish Council meeting **Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7pm in the Community Centre**

Meeting closed:

Signed by

Chair.....

Date.....

Attachments.

1. Budget to spend report
2. Half Yearly Statement
3. Draft budget

1. Budget to spend report

Receipts	Actual	Budget	Variance
Precept	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ -
Interest	£ 1,585.68	£ 400.00	£ 1,185.68
VAT Refund	£ 6,589.20	£ -	£ 6,589.20
Other	£ 1,847.00	£ -	£ -
Total	£75,021.88	£65,400.00	£ 7,774.88
Payments			
VAT	£ 5,128.98	£ -	£ 5,128.98
Salary/HMRC	£ 8,827.88	£ 18,375.00	-£ 9,547.12
Pension	£ 1,915.89	£ 4,500.00	-£ 2,584.11
Clerks allowance/mileage	£ 190.25	£ 470.00	-£ 279.75
Admin/Hallhire/Membership/ stationery/Audit/elections/bank fees	£ 630.53	£ 494.00	£ 136.53
Memberships	£ 1,103.39	£ 1,000.00	£ 103.39
Audit	£ 440.00	£ 600.00	-£ 160.00
Insurance	£ 1,657.13	£ 1,500.00	£ 157.13
Phone	£ 62.74	£ 102.00	-£ 39.26
Training	£ 80.00	£ 300.00	-£ 220.00
Grass cutting/hedges	£ 12,429.63	£ 22,000.00	-£ 9,570.37
Ditches	£ 4,650.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 3,650.00
Trees	£ 5,337.06	£ 5,000.00	£ 337.06
Weed Killing	£ 796.00	£ 2,433.60	-£ 1,637.60
Safety Inspections	£ 411.06	£ 2,500.00	-£ 2,088.94
Tennis/MUGA/Misc estates	£ 5,566.48	£ 4,000.00	£ 1,566.48
CIL	£ 3,867.64	£ -	£ 3,867.64
Bins	£ 879.32	£ 850.00	£ 29.32
Play Equipment/contingency	£ 759.95	£ 5,000.00	-£ 4,240.05
Grants	£ 1,681.49	£ 6,500.00	-£ 4,818.51
IT	£ 1,225.83	£ 2,550.00	-£ 1,324.17
S137	£ -	£ 100.00	-£ 100.00
Total	£57,641.25	£79,274.60	-£ 21,633.35

2. Half yearly statement

Half yearly review as at 30th September 2023				
	2024/25	2025/26	As at	2025/26
RECEIPTS	Actuals	Estimates	End Sept.	Projected
Precept	£ 62,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00
Interest	£ 1,526.57	£ 400.00	£ 817.92	£ 1,200.00
Other	£ 3,344.81	£ -	£ 1,847.00	£ 5,000.00
Adjustment	£ 110.64	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total receipts	£ 66,982.02	£ 65,400.00	£ 67,664.92	£ 71,200.00
	2024/25	2025/26	As at	2024/25
PAYMENTS	Actuals	Budget	End Sept.	Projected
Salary/HMRC	£ 8,399.40	£ 18,375.00	£ 7,683.65	£ 15,367.30
Pension	£ 1,774.46	£ 4,500.00	£ 1,609.52	£ 3,219.04
Clerks allowance/mileage	£ 156.00	£ 470.00	£ 190.25	£ 380.50
stationery/elections/bank fees	£ 1,446.43	£ 494.00	£ 613.29	£ 850.00
Memberships	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,103.39	£ 1,103.39
Audit	£ 2,090.00	£ 600.00	£ 125.00	£ 565.00
Insurance	£ 920.16	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,657.13	£ 1,657.13
Phone	£ 40.00	£ 102.00	£ 53.70	£ 107.40
Training	£ 375.00	£ 300.00	£ 80.00	£ 200.00
Grass cutting/hedges	£ 11,581.50	£ 22,000.00	£ 10,081.16	£ 22,000.00
Ditches	£ 1,177.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 4,650.00	£ 4,650.00
Trees	£ 1,595.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 4,635.06	£ 6,500.00
Weed Killing	£ 2,283.20	£ 2,433.60	£ 796.00	£ 2,433.60
Safety Inspections	£ 400.46	£ 2,500.00	£ 337.44	£ 674.88
Tennis/MUGA/Misc estates	£ 2,372.73	£ 4,000.00	£ 5,129.49	£ 6,000.00
Bins	£ 4,364.84	£ 850.00	£ 541.32	£ 1,082.64
Play Equipment/contingency	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 759.95	£ 1,500.00
Grants	£ 1,400.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 1,681.49	£ 6,500.00
IT	£ 1,936.39	£ 2,550.00	£ 1,225.83	£ 2,550.00
S137	£ 25.00	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 25.00
Adjustment	£ 3.00	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total payments	£ 42,340.57	£ 79,274.60	£ 42,953.67	£ 77,365.88
Surplus/Deficit	£ 24,641.45	-£ 13,874.60	£ 24,711.25	-£ 6,165.88
Projected funds 31/03/2026				
Funds 31/03/25		£ 71,409.52	(Excluding CIL)	
projected Receipts 2025/26		£ 71,200.00		
projected Payments 2025/26		£ 77,365.88		
Estimated funds 31/03/2025		£ 65,243.64	Funds should be at least 50% of Precept	
CIL Summary				
Cil balance 31/03/25	£ 18,240.17			
Cil receipts	Receipts	Payments		
Cil bank account interest 1/4/25-30/9/25	£ 179.92			
CIL payments made		£ 3,867.64		
CIL funds to be allocated	£ 14,552.45			

3. Draft Budget 2026/27

RECEIPTS	Actual 24-25	Budget 25-26	Projected 31/3/26	Budget 26-27
Precept	£ 62,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 70,000.00
Interest	£ 1,526.57	£ 400.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 800.00
Other	£ 3,344.81	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ -
Adjustment	£ 110.64	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total	£ 66,982.02	£ 65,400.00	£ 71,200.00	£ 70,800.00
PAYMENTS (ex VAT)	Actual 24-25	Budget 25-26	Projected 31/3/26	Budget 26-27
Salary/HMRC	£ 8,399.40	£ 18,375.00	£ 15,367.30	£ 19,000.00
Pension	£ 1,774.46	£ 4,500.00	£ 3,219.40	£ 4,200.00
Clerks allowance/mileage	£ 156.00	£ 470.00	£ 380.50	£ 500.00
Admin/Hallhire/ stationery/bank fees	£ 1,446.43	£ 494.00	£ 850.00	£ 300.00
Memberships	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,103.39	£ 1,300.00
Audit	£ 2,090.00	£ 600.00	£ 565.00	£ 600.00
Insurance	£ 920.16	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,657.13	£ 1,800.00
Phone	£ 40.00	£ 102.00	£ 107.40	£ 120.00
Training	£ 375.00	£ 300.00	£ 200.00	£ 250.00
Grass cutting/hedges	£ 11,581.50	£ 22,000.00	£ 22,000.00	£ 20,000.00
Ditches	£ 1,177.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 4,650.00	£ 1,000.00
Trees	£ 1,595.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 5,000.00
Weed Killing	£ 2,283.20	£ 2,433.60	£ 2,433.60	£ 2,721.60
Safety Inspections	£ 400.46	£ 2,500.00	£ 674.88	£ 1,000.00
Tennis/MUGA/Misc estates	£ 2,372.73	£ 4,000.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 2,000.00
Bins	£ 4,364.84	£ 850.00	£ 1,082.64	£ 1,000.00
Play Equipment/contingency	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 5,000.00
Grants	£ 1,400.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 2,500.00
IT	£ 1,936.39	£ 2,550.00	£ 2,550.00	£ 1,500.00
S137	£ 25.00	£ 100.00	£ 25.00	£ 25.00
Adjustment	£ 3.00	£ -	£ -	£ -
Elections				£ 1,000.00
Youth provision				£ 5,000.00
Community Association				
Total	£ 42,340.57	£ 79,274.60	£ 77,366.24	£ 75,816.60
Surplus/Deficit	£ 24,641.45	-£ 13,874.60	-£ 6,166.24	-£ 5,016.60
Opening balance 1/4/25				
Unity accounts			£ 111,671.86	
Closing balance	£ -		£ 105,505.62	
Earmarked reserves				
Trees			£ 20,000.00	
Replacement play equipment			£ 10,000.00	
Skate park			£ 30,000.00	
Flood plain			£ 10,000.00	
			£ 70,000.00	