



Minutes of the meeting of Cotford St Luke Parish Council held on **Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7pm.**

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

In attendance: 6 members of the public and Helen McGladdery - Clerk and RFO

“Have Your Say”

1. One resident was representing "Cotford Corners" a voluntary group who used to carry out general vegetation/leaf clearance around the parish. They wished to restart the group but were looking for options of where to dispose of the green matter.

Action: The Parish Council agreed to look into this matter and feedback at the March meeting

2. Two residents wanted to discuss the hedge cutting at Needhams Patch, they still had concerns over ownership and future maintenance and raised concerns over communication. The Clerk requested contact details to continue discussions, one resident declined and the other resident passed on details.

Action: Make contact with resident to resolve this matter

3. One resident had concerns over a recent tree felling on the floodplain. They were advised that the tree had Ash dieback, which was identified by Vince Cainey - BSC who carried out the tree survey for the Parish Council.
4. One resident raised concerns over Crown land in the Parish. They were advised the PC are working with SC to try and get them to take responsibility and support the Parish.

Meeting starts: 7.35pm

195/26 **To receive and approve apologies for absence.**
None

196/26 **To receive declarations of pecuniary or personal interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations.**
None

197/26 **To approve the draft minutes of:**
The Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 20th November 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

198/26

To receive reports from:

a. Somerset Councillors.

SC Cllr's Sully and Rigby did not attend the meeting but their report was distributed to Councillors and will be added to the website for residents to read

Action: Add report to the website

b. Police report

The police report highlighted calls related to 1 criminal damage, 1 criminal damage to a vehicle and 1 public order/harassment

199/26

Community Association

a. To receive report from Trustees

Councillors were advised the caretaker has started his role and has been reporting to The Clerk. The CA are continuing investigations into an increased water bill in 2025. They are looking for a competitive cleaner to carry out a deep clean and cooker clean. The Clerk advised she was still in consultation with SC to try to get a payment for the outstanding costs due to the CA.

b. Update on Joint Management Committee meeting

Cllr McCrea attended the meeting in December, minutes of the meeting have been circulated to Councillors. A representative from the Richard Huish Trust was present and advised if the academy status progresses as planned they wish to continue things as they are now with regards to the building and JMC.

200/26

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

- Laurel hedge - Cllr Freeman has met with residents and the work has been completed
- Co-option paperwork for Cllr Barter sent to SC
- Facebook post added re Community Association
- Discussions continuing with SC re outstanding money owed to CA from SC
- Grant of £4,500 paid to CA
- Internal audit report, conclusion of audit, minutes, tennis court/MUGA risk assessment and Crown land and tree policy all added to website
- New laptop purchased for Clerk
- Information received relating to signs for community centre, to be progressed
- Lovell emergency contact details added to Facebook

- Land registry searches carried out, and confirmation received regarding open spaces/memorial field and north villas playing field all being owned by Crown
- All TPO applications completed and verified, awaiting decision from SC before work can commence
- Parsons completed flood plain cutting of grass, clearing drainage pipes and transplanting oak saplings onto playing field

Correspondence received

- Multiple emails re Laurel Hedge
- Parking concerns Burge Crescent
- Request for flood survey

201/26

Amenities and assets:

a. To discuss taking ownership of play parks from Somerset Council

The Clerk advised that Councils are being invited by Somerset Council to take on ownership of assets from them - this is an ongoing project. Councillors discussed the financial implication and time involved for management

Resolved: Not to take on ownership of any play areas this year, but to look into this matter over the next 12 months and consult with residents over any increase in precept that would be required to achieve this. This can then be discussed again when setting the budget for 27/28

Actions:

1. Add to future agenda
2. The Clerk to obtain costs

b. To discuss taking ownership of Crown land in the Parish

Cotford St Luke is in a very unique position (the only place in Somerset) where the development was built and the developer went into liquidation before the open spaces were signed over to the local authority, so have fallen to Crown (i.e. no-one owns them). The PC has taken over the cutting of the grass areas and has carried out emergency work to trees highlighted as dangerous in a professional tree survey. The Clerk and Chair are in regular contact with the Head of Operations at Somerset Council to push for them to fulfil their obligations to manage these areas or support the parish with this. The Clerk advised it would not be advisable to take ownership at present.

Resolved: Councillors agreed not to take ownership of the land

202/26

Trees, flood defences and Crown Land

a. To receive update on tree works in the Parish and to approve any additional works required

Parkers have completed their felling work of diseased trees, as instructed SC will be dead wooding two trees w/c 19th January
TPO applications are still outstanding for 3 trees.

Resolved: A budget of £1,500 was set to plant new trees on the floodplain to replace trees that had been felled

Action: The Clerk to instruct Parsons to plant the trees with tree guards

b. To receive update on flood defence survey recommendations/actions

The ditches in the parish have been cleared and landowners have been invoiced for the works.

Recommendations are being worked through and one item raised was part of the floodplain being used as an extension of gardens by residents. The Clerk can confirm through land registry searches, that it appears some of this land has been officially registered to those properties, but more investigation is needed.

c. To receive further updates from Somerset Council on Crown Land management in the parish

No further updates, but correspondence between PC and SC ongoing

d. To receive update on SRA grant

The SRA denied the PC request to reallocate funds to the floodplain work. The following amounts of the original grant remain:

Tree removal/cutting back trees/hedges in and around attenuation ponds £4,575. Attenuation pond clearance £3,000. Reinstate dry ditch £6,000 - however the flood defence survey states this is not viable as the paths surrounding the ditch are not stable and would need reinforcing, to prevent landslips.

Action: Apply again to the SRA for funding towards other recommendations from the flood survey

e. To receive update on agreement with Somerset Council to plant oak saplings on their land

The saplings have been planted on the playing field and an agreement has been signed between SC and PC that the PC will now take responsibility for these trees.

f. To discuss Somerset Wildlife Trust initiatives

Deferred pending further information

g. To discuss plan to manage Himalayan Balsam

Cllr Harrison will contact the Friends of Longrun and the Friends of Netherclay to ascertain how they manage Himalayan Balsam and she will progress with volunteers in the parish

Action: The Clerk to pass on contact details for Friends of Netherclay

203/26 Youth Shelter -

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

An estimation was received from Trevor Parsons of up to £1,000 to make the ground safe if the shelter was removed.

Resolved: As no complaints have been received recently the shelter will remain in place

b. To agree next steps to consult residents

Not required at this time

Finance**a. Details of Receipts and Payment since the previous meeting****Receipts:**

CIL Account interest	£80.20
Reserves Account interest	£586.85

Payments:

Mobile phone - November	£9.04
Parsons - October	£1,639.76
SALC - Bridget training	£25.00
Complete weed control	£1,694.40
Jill Larcombe - Internal audit	£65.00
HMRC - Nov	£368.46
SC Pensions - Nov	£341.64
H McGladdery Nov expenses	£20.75
Bank service charge - November	£6.00
Mobile phone - December	£9.04
Helen McGladdery - laptop	£549.00
CSL Community Ass Grant	£4,500.00
Somerset Web services - extra emails	£63.60
Parsons - November	£1,639.76
Somerset Council - tree inspection 888	£19.80
Community Ass - hire Sept/Nov	£40.00
SC Pensions - December	£341.64
HMRC - December	£368.46
H McGladdery - Dec expenses	£94.46
Bank service charge - Dec	£6.00
The Clerk's November and December salaries were paid in this period.	

b. Details of invoices for approval

Parkers tree care - Inv 313	£1710.00
Parsons – December ground maintenance	£1639.76
Cotford St Luke School - Caretaker fees	£90.00
50% of charges will be invoiced to CA	
Parsons - Laurel Hedge	£2,364.00
Parsons - Lovell ditch	£691.20
(PC has invoiced Lovell for this work)	
Cllr McCrea - expenses	£59.09

c. To receive budget to spend report - attached**d. To receive the three-year forecast - attached**

Action: To be added to the website

e. To confirm the budget for 2026/27 - attached

Councillors discussed the budget for the next 12 months and advised a budget setting meeting was held so Councillors could look at each cost in detail.

Action: To be added to the website

f. To confirm the earmarked reserves for 2026/27 - see attached budget

g. To confirm the Precept request from Somerset Council for 2026/27

The precept was not increased in 25/26, so it was agreed to increase it for 26/27 to enable the PC to continue carrying out work in the parish. Full details will be communicated in a newsletter to all residents. The increase will equate to an extra 65p per month for a band D property.

Resolved: Councillors approved a precept request from Somerset Council of £73,000.00

Action: The Clerk to submit the request to SC by 31st January 2026

h. To approve the amended grants policy

Resolved: The amendments to the policy were approved, the main amendment was details of when applications can be made and the meeting dates decisions would be considered.

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

i. To confirm bank signatories

Current signatories are Cllr McCrea, Cllr Birch and Cllr Draper-Gammon, all transactions require 2 Councillors approval.

Resolved: Cllr Barter and Cllr Freeman to be added as signatories

Action: The Clerk to progress the application to amend the signatories

205/26 Planning Applications:

a. To agree response to planning applications received

53/25/0008 - Change of use and conversion of garage into a childminding use at 92 Burge Meadow, Cotford St Luke

Resolved: No objection but comments forwarded - see attached

Action: The Clerk to submit the response

206/26 Newsletter

To discuss producing a newsletter for residents in February to detail general information and confirm budget for 2026/27 and precept request

Resolved: To produce an information booklet for residents detailing general information, meeting dates, FAQ's and details of the 26/27 budget. This will be delivered by volunteers to every home in February. A quote from Carly Press of £184.00 was approved

Actions:

1. Cllr Draper-Gammon, Cllr Birch and The Clerk to collate the information
2. The Clerk to send information to Carly Press and arrange delivery to Cllr Draper-Gammon for distribution to volunteers

207/26 **Emergency Plan - To discuss setting up a plan and making a grant application**
 to Somerset Prepared for essential items
 Resolved: Cllr Freeman and Cllr McCrea to prepare a draft plan and compile list of items for a Somerset Prepared grant application
Action: Add to March agenda for approval

208/26 **Items from Councillors for inclusion in the next meeting.**
 ● SWT initiatives
 ● Emergency Plan
 ● Cotford Corners - waste disposal

209/26 **Next meeting:** Parish Council meeting **Thursday 19th March 2026 at 7pm in the Community Centre**

Meeting closed: 8.25pm

Signed Chair:

Attachments:

1. Budget to spend report
2. Three Year Forecast
3. Budget 26/27
4. Planning response

Budget to spend report

Receipts	Actual	Budget	Variance
Precept	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ -
Interest	£ 2,252.73	£ 400.00	£ 1,852.73
VAT Refund	£ 6,589.20	£ -	£ 6,589.20
Other	£ 1,847.00	£ -	£ -
Total	£75,688.93	£ 65,400.00	£ 8,441.93
Payments			
VAT	£ 6,063.36	£ -	£ 6,063.36
Salary/HMRC	£ 11,394.12	£ 18,375.00	-£ 6,980.88
Pension	£ 2,599.17	£ 4,500.00	-£ 1,900.83
Clerks allowance/mileage	£ 277.97	£ 470.00	-£ 192.03
Admin/Hallhire/Membership/ stationery/Audit/elections/bank fees	£ 710.02	£ 494.00	£ 216.02
Memberships	£ 1,103.39	£ 1,000.00	£ 103.39
Audit	£ 505.00	£ 600.00	-£ 95.00
Insurance	£ 1,657.13	£ 1,500.00	£ 157.13
Phone	£ 80.82	£ 102.00	-£ 21.18
Training	£ 105.00	£ 300.00	-£ 195.00
Grass cutting/hedges	£ 15,162.57	£ 22,000.00	-£ 6,837.43
Ditches	£ 4,650.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 3,650.00
Trees	£ 5,353.56	£ 5,000.00	£ 353.56
Weed Killing	£ 2,208.00	£ 2,433.60	-£ 225.60
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	£ 6,181.49	£ 6,500.00	-£ 318.51
IT	£ 1,736.33	£ 2,550.00	-£ 813.67
S137	£ 25.00	£ 100.00	-£ 75.00
Total	£71,297.38	£ 79,274.60	-£ 7,977.22

Three Year Forecast

RECEIPTS		Estimate 25-26	Forecast 26-27	Forecast 27-28	Forecast 28-29
Precept from SC		£ 65,000.00	£ 73,000.00	£ 80,000.00	£ 90,000.00
Bank interest		£ 1,200.00	£ 800.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
Total receipts		£ 66,200.00	£ 73,800.00	£ 81,000.00	£ 91,000.00
PAYMENTS					
Clerk's salary inc NI contributions		£ 15,367.30	£ 19,000.00	£ 20,500.00	£ 22,000.00
Pension contributions		£ 3,219.40	£ 3,122.00	£ 3,200.00	£ 3,294.00
Clerk's Home working allowance and mileage		£ 380.50	£ 500.00	£ 550.00	£ 600.00
Admin/hall hire/stationery/bank fees		£ 850.00	£ 500.00	£ 550.00	£ 600.00
Membership		£ 1,103.39	£ 1,300.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,750.00
Audit		£ 565.00	£ 600.00	£ 650.00	£ 700.00
Insurance		£ 1,657.13	£ 1,800.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,200.00
Telephone		£ 107.40	£ 120.00	£ 135.00	£ 150.00
Training Clerk and Councillors		£ 200.00	£ 250.00	£ 300.00	£ 350.00
Grass and hedge Cutting		£ 17,500.00	£ 20,000.00	£ 24,000.00	£ 27,500.00
Culverts/Drains/Ditches		£ 4,650.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,500.00
Tree maintenance		£ 6,500.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,500.00	£ 6,000.00
Weed Killing		£ 2,433.60	£ 2,721.60	£ 2,850.00	£ 3,000.00
Safety Inspections		£ 674.88	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,500.00
Tennis Courts & MUGA		£ 6,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,250.00	£ 2,500.00
Litter/Dog Bins		£ 1,082.64	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,750.00
Gym equipment and Contingency		£ 1,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 3,000.00	£ 5,000.00
NON S137 grants		£ 2,000.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00
S137		£ 25.00	£ 25.00	£ 30.00	£ 35.00
Election fees		£ -	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00
IT		£ 1,700.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,750.00
Youth provision		£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
Community Association		£ 4,500.00	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,500.00	£ 4,000.00
Total payments		£ 72,016.24	£ 72,888.60	£ 80,865.00	£ 90,929.00
Surplus/Deficit for the year		-£ 5,816.24	£ 911.40	£ 135.00	£ 71.00
Opening balance of PC Reserves and Current account Funds		£ 93,431.69	£ 87,615.45	£ 88,526.85	£ 88,661.85
Estimated closing balance of PC Funds		£ 87,615.45	£ 88,526.85	£ 88,661.85	£ 88,732.85
Reserves should be 50% of precept		£ 32,500.00	£ 36,500.00	£ 40,000.00	£ 45,000.00
CIL Funds					
Opening balance		£ 18,240.17	£ 14,552.45		
Receipts		£ -	£ 46,600.00		
Interest		£ 179.92	£ 500.00		
Payments		£ 3,867.64			
Ring fenced		£ -			
Unallocated CIL		£ 14,552.45	£ 61,652.45		

Budget 26/27

BUDGET 2026-27			
ESTIMATED RECEIPTS	25/26 Budget	25/26 Projected	Budget 26/27
Precept - Received from Somerset Council (Residents element of Council tax bill)	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 73,000.00
Bank interest - Variable based on interest rate	£ 400.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 800.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£ 65,400.00	£ 66,200.00	£ 73,800.00
ESTIMATED PAYMENTS	25/26 Budget	25/26 Projected	Budget 26/27
Basic payments			
Clerk's salary inc NI contributions - Clerks salary is based on a job evaluation for the role the Clerk carries out, based on duties required for the role. Budget to increase clerks hours to 15 per week if required due to additional workload and includes Employers NI.	£ 18,375.00	£ 15,367.30	£ 19,000.00
Pension contributions - The Clerk is in the Local Government pension scheme, the same as Somerset Council employees and the employer contributions are reduced this year to 17.9% from 22.3% of the Clerks salary, so this payment will increase with any pay increase or increase in hours for the Clerk	£ 4,500.00	£ 3,219.40	£ 3,122.00
Clerk's Home working allowance and travel expenses - This is the HMRC set amount for working from home as an office, use of light heat, WIFI, storage of files etc in addition work related travel expenses	£ 470.00	£ 380.50	£ 500.00
Admin/Hall hire/ stationery/bank fees - paper/envelopes/stamps/ink	£ 494.00	£ 850.00	£ 500.00
Membership - SALC and SLCC Membership, enabling the PC to obtain advice for free, document templates etc. and training at reduced costs	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,103.39	£ 1,300.00
Audit fees - Internal audit £100, external audit £500	£ 600.00	£ 565.00	£ 600.00
Insurance - This will increase if the PC take on responsibility for the play parks in the Parish from Somerset Council	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,657.13	£ 1,800.00
Phone - mobile phone for Clerk	£ 102.00	£ 107.40	£ 120.00
Training - For Clerk and Councillors	£ 300.00	£ 200.00	£ 250.00
Grass and Hedge Cutting - PC pays for 6 additional cuts to Graham Way and Dene Road to compliment the SC cuts at a cost of £479.10 each time. In addition the PC pays to cut grass areas within the development using a private contractor	£ 22,000.00	£ 17,500.00	£ 20,000.00
Culverts/Drains/Ditches - Clearing ditches not owned by anyone to prevent flooding	£ 1,000.00	£ 4,650.00	£ 2,000.00
Tree maintenance - For trees requiring work in the Parish	£ 5,000.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 5,000.00
Weed Killing - SC do not carry out any weedkilling in the parish	£ 2,433.60	£ 2,433.60	£ 2,721.60
Safety Inspections - Currently monthly inspections are carried out by SC for Exercise equipment, tennis Court and MUGA, this will increase if additional play areas taken on by PC from SC	£ 2,500.00	£ 674.88	£ 1,000.00
Tennis Courts & MUGA - Work to keep the playing area safe	£ 4,000.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 2,000.00
Litter/Dog Bins - The Charge Somerset Council applies to empty the 2 dog bins owned by the PC at Dene Rd and Burge Crescent. Any new bin installed would incur a weekly charge of £6.50 to have it emptied (twice a week)	£ 850.00	£ 1,082.64	£ 1,200.00
Gym equipment and Contingency - repairs of gym equipment and In caseworks are required to above areas	£ 5,000.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,500.00
NON S137 - Grants to local groups/charitable organisations, please note grants are not permitted to individuals or businesses	£ 6,500.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 2,500.00
S137 - This is where the PC does not have powers to spend, this amount is limited to £10.81 per electorate each year. This is used for the Poppy Wreath	£ 100.00	£ 25.00	£ 25.00
Election fees - contingency in case election called in parish	£ -	£ -	£ 1,250.00
IT - Website management, domain and Google suite/email storage	£ 2,550.00	£ 1,700.00	£ 1,500.00
Youth Provision - Youth projects and services in the parish	£ -	£ -	£ 1,000.00
Community Association - support grant to assist with running costs	£ -	£ -	£ 3,000.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£ 79,274.60	£ 72,016.24	£ 72,888.60
Deficit/Surplus	-£ 13,874.60	-£ 5,816.24	£ 911.40
 earmarked reserves			
Deficit from 25/26 and 26/27	£ 13,250.00		
Flood plain	£ 7,000.00		£ 10,000.00
Trees	£ 3,750.00		£ 10,000.00
Youth provision			£ 4,000.00
	£ 24,000.00		£ 24,000.00

Planning response

Re: Planning Application 53/25/0008

Change of use and conversion of garage into a childminding use

92 Burge Meadow, Cotford St Luke

Cotford St Luke Parish Council considered the above planning application at its meeting and wishes to submit the following comments.

The Parish Council raises no objection in principle to the proposed change of use; however, this position is subject to appropriate conditions being imposed to address concerns relating to parking, highway safety, residential amenity, and emergency access.

Burge Meadow already experiences significant parking pressure, with limited on-street capacity and a high level of demand from existing residents. Members are concerned that the loss of the garage space, together with additional vehicle movements associated with child drop-off and collection, could exacerbate existing parking stress.

Residents have highlighted that disruption already occurs during term time when a school bus collects children elsewhere on Burge Meadow, at times blocking the road and requiring vehicles to divert via the alternative exit. There is concern that similar disruption could arise during childminding drop-off and collection periods, particularly at peak times, resulting in vehicles parking in unsuitable locations, including the middle of the carriageway, across driveways, or on private drives.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that unmanaged parking associated with the proposal could compromise highway safety, increase risks to pedestrians and children, and potentially obstruct access for emergency vehicles. The property's corner location further increases sensitivity in terms of access, visibility, and congestion.

In addition, residents have expressed concerns regarding potential noise impacts, dependent on the number of children present at any one time, and the cumulative effect this may have on neighbouring residential amenity.

In light of the above, the Parish Council requests that, should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant permission, this is made subject to conditions, including (but not limited to):

- The provision and retention of sufficient dedicated off-street parking to accommodate childminding drop-off and collection without reliance on on-street parking.
- A parking and drop-off/collection management plan, detailing how disruption to Burge Meadow will be minimised.
- Controls on the maximum number of children cared for at any one time.
- Any additional measures necessary to ensure safe and unobstructed access for emergency services.

Subject to the imposition and enforcement of appropriate conditions to address these matters, Cotford St Luke Parish Council would raise no objection to the application.