



Minutes of the meeting of Cotford St Luke Parish Council held on **Thursday 19th March 2026, at 7pm** in the Community Centre, Bethell Mead, Cotford St Luke.

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

In attendance: Somerset Cllr Rigby and Helen McGladdery - Clerk and RFO

Have your say

No members of the public present, so no items raised

Meeting starts: 7.00pm

210/26 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

None

211/26 To receive declarations of pecuniary or personal interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations.

None

212/26 To approve the draft minutes of The Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 15th January 2026

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

Action: The Clerk to add to the website

213/26 To receive reports from:

a. Somerset Councillors.

Cllr Rigby gave a verbal report detailing the Somerset Council's current financial position and advised a new permanent finance director has been appointed along with a new head of planning. He also confirmed he has - and continues to - work to ensure the Cotford St Luke roads are added to the schedule for repair.

b. Police report

Cotford St Luke now comes under the Taunton policing team (previously Wellington) The PCSO is Mike Bell and he has arranged an introductory meeting with PC Representatives.

214/26 Community Association

a. To receive report from Trustees

The Trustees report was distributed to Councillors detailing resolution of outstanding utility bill queries, details of upcoming cleaning and the Clerk added that the instruction of the caretaker has been a real benefit, carrying out checks and repairs.

b. To approve purchase of directional sign from Somerset Council

Resolved: The PC agreed to purchase a directional sign to be added to the roundabout for the Community Centre from Somerset Council at a cost of £70.00

Action: The Clerk to advise SC

215/26

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

- Minutes, SC Cllr report, Budget and Three-year forecast added to the website
- Planting of new trees instructed
- Contact made with Friends of Netherclay re Himalayan Balsam
- Payments made
- Precept request submitted to SC and confirmation received
- Additional Bank signatories' application made awaiting signatures
- Planning response submitted
- Newsletter produced and delivered to every home in Cotford, electronic copy added to website and Facebook page

Correspondence received from residents since the last meeting:

- Fly tipping reported – assisted resident to get matter resolved
- Concerns over exposed cable – assisted resident to get matter resolved
- Request for flood survey details
- Recycling fridge freezer request
- 3 queries relating to trees
- Request for meeting dates
- Complaint about SC Road closure and bus route
- Request for support form LCN – passed to LCN Chair
- Complaint about hedge cutting
- Complaint about attenuation pond clearance work

216/26

Amenities and assets:

a. To approve purchase of Green Bin for adhoc green matter

Resolved: To purchase a green bin from SC at the cost of 73.50, to be stored at the School (as agreed with the caretaker)

Action: The Clerk to place the order

b. To discuss the purchase of a new bin in the Dene Road layby

Resolved: To purchase a litter bin at the cost of £200 from SC

Action: The Clerk to advise SC

c. To approve the purchase of a storage container for the pickleball net

Resolved: To purchase a storage bench for the pickleball net

Actions:

1. The Clerk to place the order
2. The Clerk to arrange delivery to the School
3. The Clerk to liaise with the caretaker to construct and secure the bench

d. To agree response to SC Dog Control Public Space Protection Orders

consultation

Resolved: it was agreed not to submit a response.

217/26

Trees, flood defences and Crown Land

a. To receive update on tree works in the Parish

All tree work required (per the 2025 report) within a 1 year period has now been completed

b. To set a budget for the removal of wood in the parish following tree work

Resolved: Following a vote of 4 - for and 2 -against, a quote of £1,400 from Parsons Landscapes was agreed to remove the old wood from the floodplain following recent tree works.

Action: The Clerk to instruct Parsons

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

The Chair and Clerk have recently met with Jonothan Stevens - Head of operations - SC. He is supporting the Parish in investigating SC adopting the crown land open spaces and trees within the village as well as the floodplain. Discussions are ongoing at SC but this is a positive step forward. He also advised that the PC would be able to purchase play equipment for the SC owned play area, but not be held responsible for future liability and maintenance.

Action: Cllr Barter to contact the school to seek suggestions from pupils for new play equipment

d. To discuss Somerset Wildlife Trust initiatives

Cllr Harrison advised there is a possibility of installing bat boxes and advised the historic fishing lake could be a potential project.

Action: The Clerk to forward details to SC Ecologist to investigate

e. To discuss plan to manage Himalayan Balsam and to approve quote for removal

Cllr Harrison advised that the Himalayan Balsam should be pulled up in June and can be left stacked in situ and that the Wildlife Trust will come out to assist us with the work. Therefore it was agreed not to pay for disposal.

Action: Cllr Harrison to find out possible dates from the Wildlife Trust and liaise with Cllr Draper-Gammon in order to coordinate volunteers to carry out the work

218/26

Finance and policies

a. Details of Receipts and Payment since the previous meeting

Receipts

CSL CA caretaker December	£45.00
CSL CA caretaker January	£45.93
CSL CA caretaker February	£50.62
HMRC VAT refund	£3,209.89
Lovell- Ditch clearance	£691.20

Payments:

Mobile phone - January	£9.04
Parsons - December	£1,639.76
Parkers tree - inv 313	£1,710.00
SALC - Cllr Harrison training	£25.00
Cllr McCrea expenses	£59.09
HMRC - January	£368.66
SC Pensions - January	£341.64
H McGladdery - Jan expenses	£34.74

CSL Primary School caretaking Dec	£90.00
Parsons - Laurel hedge	£2,364.00
Parsons - Lovell ditch	£691.20
Bank service charge	£6.00
Mobile phone - Feb	£9.04
Parsons - January	£1,639.76
Som Council - Deadwood tree 871	£177.60
Som Council - Bin empty and safety inspection	£493.94
HMRC - Feb	£315.29
SC Pensions - Feb	£306.37
H McGladdery - Feb Expenses	£6.74
Bank service charge	£6.00
Mobile phone - March	£9.04
CSL Primary School caretaking January	£91.87
SALC - Cllr Barter training	£25.00
SALC - Clerk GDPR 50% with BHPC	£40.00
Carly Press - CA stickers	£260.40
CSL Primary School caretaking February	£101.25
Parsons - February	£1,639.79
Carly Press - Newsletter	£193.00
The Clerks January and February salary was paid in this period	

b. Details of invoices for approval

Parsons - Floodplain work	£10,215.60
(£2,600 reclaimed from SRA grant & £1,702.60 VAT to be reclaimed)	
Parkers - Tree 869	£729.00
Parkers – Tree 888 and 885	£1,404.00
SC quarter 4 charges	£1,083.14

Action: The Clerk to arrange the payments

c. To receive budget to spend report - Attached

d. To receive an update on actions to make PC compliant for new assertion 10 on AGAR

The Clerk advised that the PC already meets many of the requirements by having dedicated emails and a website. The Clerk has attended GDPR training and will hold a briefing session for Councillors in April, an IT policy and Data audit have also been carried out

e. To adopt the IT policy and Data Audit

Deferred until May meeting pending amendments to drafts

Action: Cllr Draper-Gammon to review the policies and present recommendations ahead of the May meeting.

f. To approve ground maintenance quote from Parsons Landscapes for 2026/27

Resolved: Councillors approved a quote of £16,698.12 for all routine open space maintenance in 2026/27

Action: The Clerk to instruct Parsons

g. To approve the quote from Somerset Council for Highways cuts/dog bin emptying and safety inspections

The Clerk advised that SC will permit Parsons to carry out the additional Highways cuts if a S171 licence is applied for (this is free to Parish Councils) A quote will be obtained from Parsons for these areas and if competitive the PC will instruct Parsons not SC. The other two items were approved - Annual charge for emptying 2 dog bins £1,352.00 and annual charge for monthly Safety inspections of tennis court/muga and exercise equipment £294.48

Actions:

1. The Clerk to request quote from Parsons
2. Cllr Draper-Gammon to forward map of areas for cuts
3. Clerk to approve quote from SC (as above)

h. To approve the weed control quote for 2026/27

Resolved: Councillors approved the quote from Complete weed control at a cost of £2,721.60 to carry out 3 sprays in 2026. It was agreed to look at alternatives for 2027/28

Actions:

1. The Clerk to instruct Compete weed control
2. The Clerk to seek road sweeper costs for roads and pavements

i. To approve to delegate the Insurance renewal to the Clerk and to agree if to enter in to a 3 year agreement or take out a 1 year policy

Resolved: To delegate the renewal to the Clerk and to enter in to a long term agreement

Action: The Clerk to arrange adequate cover

j. To review the effectiveness of internal controls and internal audit

The Clerk produces monthly bank reconciliations which are checked by Cllr Birch. The internal auditor carries out her checks every 6 months. Councillors are content adequate controls are in place.

219/26 Planning Applications:

a. To agree response to planning applications received

53/25/0008 - Amended - Conversion of garage and change of use to a mixed use dwelling and childcare at 92 Burge Meadow, Cotford St Luke

No response required

Action: Add agenda item to May meeting to form planning advisory group

220/26

Emergency Plan - To receive an update on the plan and progress on making a grant application to Somerset Prepared for essential items

Cllr McCrea and Cllr Freeman have investigated various options for a plan and items to purchase.

Resolved: It was agreed the priority was to compile a list of volunteers who could help in an emergency and a list of anyone who could offer services e.g. snow clearance, trained first raiders etc, along with designated safe spaces.

Actions:

1. The Clerk to add a Facebook post and website post for volunteers and compile a list.
2. The Clerk to contact the HUB and Community Centre to check if they would like to register as a safe space in an emergency

221/26

Items from Councillors for inclusion in the next meeting.

- Cil funds spending ideas
- Speed Indicator Devices - costs and logistics
- Road sweeper costs
- Planning working party
- Election of Chair/Vice Chair
- Statement of internal controls

222/26 Next meeting: Annual meeting followed by Annual Parish Council meeting
Thursday 21st May 2026 at 6.30pm in the Community Centre

Meeting closed: 9.05pm

Signed

Attachment:

1. 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	£ 9,799.09	£ -	£ 9,799.09
Other	£ 2,629.13	£ -	£ -
Total	£79,680.95	£65,400.00	£ 11,651.82
Payments			
VAT	£ 9,613.46	£ -	£ 9,613.46
Salary/HMRC	£13,821.47	£18,375.00	-£ 4,553.53
Pension	£ 3,247.18	£ 4,500.00	-£ 1,252.82
Clerks allowance/mileage	£ 277.97	£ 470.00	-£ 192.03
Admin/Hallhire/Membership/ stationery/Audit/elections/bank fees	£ 1,015.59	£ 494.00	£ 521.59
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	£ 107.94	£ 102.00	£ 5.94
Training	£ 195.00	£ 300.00	-£ 105.00
Grass cutting/hedges/Floodplain	£29,745.00	£22,000.00	£ 7,745.00
Ditches	£ 5,226.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 4,226.00
Trees	£ 7,534.06	£ 5,000.00	£ 2,534.06
Weed Killing	£ 2,208.00	£ 2,433.60	-£ 225.60
Safety Inspections	£ 484.68	£ 2,500.00	-£ 2,015.32
Tennis/MUGA/Comm Association	£ 6,110.00	£ 4,000.00	£ 2,110.00
CIL	£ 3,867.64	£ -	£ 3,867.64
Bins	£ 1,217.32	£ 850.00	£ 367.32
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	£96,639.60	£79,274.60	£ 17,365.00