

MINUTES OF THE AGM OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, WEDNESDAY 13th May 2026 at 6pm.

PRESENT: Cllr. J Harrison, Cllr. B Lenthall, Cllr. C Brown, Cllr. J Jackson, Cllr. S Humphrey and SCC Cllr. S Wakefield. Twelve members of the public.

Chairman Cllr. J Harrison opened the meeting at 6pm, welcoming all.

134/11: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr. D Bradbeer.

135/11: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Cllr. Harrison: Corfe, Pitminster and Trull Almshouse Trust. Cllr. C Brown: Village Hall Committee. Cllr. J Jackson: Corfe Community Trust.

136/11: ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN. Cllr. J Harrison was duly elected proposed by Cllr. J Jackson seconded by Cllr. B Lenthall.

137/11: ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN. Cllr. B Lenthall was duly elected proposed by Cllr J Harrison seconded by Cllr. S Humphrey.

138/11: MINUTES OF THE CORFE PARISH COUNCIL AGM AND CORFE SOCIETIES AGM HELD on WEDNESDAY 7th May 2025 and WEDNESDAY 18th March 2026.

Were discussed - outstanding items to be included in agenda items. The minutes have been circulated, published, and signed as an accurate record.

139/11: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES. Nothing was noted.

140/11: REPORTS OF COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

SCC Cllr S Wakefield of Somerset County Council addressed the meeting highlighting items from the SCC May report such as continuing financial issues, ongoing pothole and gully works, venting of highway drains, with still much more to do with limited funds.

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Latest-SCC-Report.pdf>

SCC Cllr S Wakefield then shared what she knew of land being proposed for a major development at Orchard Portman and the likely timescales involved. Such a development would have a knock-on effect for several parishes including Corfe. She encouraged engaging with our neighbours to understand better what might be coming and how to secure a best possible outcome, if possible, if or when planning consent becomes a reality. More information should become available in June so nothing can be done at present until this is known. Based on current timescales for large developments such as what might be proposed it will take at least 10 years before any building could probably begin. Taylor Wimpey and partners are the landowners. It should be noted that Somerset County Council have been tasked by Government to supply 75,000 new homes.

SCC Cllr S Wakefield then answered questions from the floor. She also focused on current Corfe issues such as the speeding at different times of the day. She noted personally it being a major problem. Cllr C Brown reassured those present that Corfe Community Speed Watch was now back operating and that three new recruits had been taken on. He also voiced his dismay that the police do not operate camera patrols around 5pm as he had on numerous occasions informed them this was the worst time for speeding.

The position regarding planning permission for the White Hart to be converted was then briefly discussed and SCC Cllr S Wakefield encouraged any affected neighbours to report concerns to her especially if any ongoing remedial/improvement works by the owner was affecting them. We believe that no decision has yet been made on the current planning proposal. Once more is known we will inform residents.

141/11: CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW.

This has been signed off and approved to be circulated.

142/11: APPROVAL OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/26.

This has been signed off and approved to be circulated.

143/11: APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT 2025/26.

This has been signed off and approved to be circulated.

Cllr J Harrison thanked Cllr J Jackson and his internal auditor, Karen Dewhurst, for doing this work.

144/11: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.

PLANNING: Cllr J Harrison – Reported he had no news on the White Hart Inn planning application or the Barn conversion proposal at Barton Grange. A new application has just arrived today for Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club, and this will be reviewed by councillors and commented on in due course.

HIGHWAYS: Cllr B. Lenthall – Reported that he was still pushing Highways for a ‘Stop’ sign at the crossroads at the top of Corfe Hill to replace the ‘Give Way’ sign as accidents continue to mount up.

He also highlighted that gully clearing and venting was the sole responsibility of Keir, the contractor hired by Highways to do this work and that he was personally dismayed at the poor quality and lack of success currently being shown by the contractor. Many drains are being ignored if blocked, with no return work planned. Such an example in Corfe is in Mill Lane which they insist cannot be done due to their machinery being too big to attend. SCC S Wakefield and Cllr B Lenthall will remind Keir of their contractual duties, and this should be remedied in due course as these are Highway drains.

Mr N Bailey has agreed to act as a focal point for any flooding issues in and around Corfe, and Cllr B Lenthall will speak with him in due course on these and any other flooding matters. Cllr J Harrison reported that he had personally approached twelve private contractors with a view to investigating what the blockages were in drains and gullies in and around Corfe. Such work would need to be paid for from available Parish funds if financially approved. The contractors however informed us that they were not covered to work on any highway drains and take responsibility so turned down the work. Cllr B Lenthall was not happy that we should be doing this as the contract for this work was with Keir who did have such insurance and were being paid substantial amounts to do this work. The matter will be fed back to Highways for comment. Residents are also encouraged to engage with the relevant authorities personally as this may well pressure those in office to act much faster by doing so.

RIGHTS OF WAY: Cllr D. Bradbeer – Had nothing new to report and is currently recuperating after a nasty accident. Those present wished him well for a speedy recovery.

WEBSITE: Cllr J Jackson – Reported that Corfe residents continue to be kept in touch with village news and issues via a variety of social media channels.

The website is running smoothly and provides an accessible home for all village and Somerset County information. Thanks once again to Andrew Moloney for his invaluable assistance with the website.

The village WhatsApp group, Keep Corfe Heathy, now has 134 members and provides an invaluable source of up-to-date information. New people moving into the village are keen to join up. During the year, another village chat group was launched by Hayley Smith.

The Facebook page is well maintained by Emma Bowers and Andrew Moloney.

The village email newsletter is distributed every couple of months to 120 people, providing a summary of village news and events.

VILLAGE HALL: Mr K Gosling – Had nothing new to report having already supplied us with a report for the Corfe Societies AGM (see separate minutes). He did, however, inform us that a newly formed children’s activity group will be operating at the hall shortly. Full details and dates will be going out soon. It is called ‘Little Adventure Land’ and we wish them well.

GREEN PORTFOLIO – We still currently are without a portfolio holder. No green issues were raised from the floor at this meeting by those present. It was then discussed by Councillors with a conclusion that this would now be shelved as a regular portfolio item until such time as a green project could be viable and a champion found to present it.

ALMSHOUSE CHARITY SELICKS GREEN REPORT – Cllr J Harrison – Had nothing new to report having already offered up a report to the Corfe Societies AGM (see separate minutes).

QUEENS ACRE AND PLAY AREA – Cllr S Humphries – Nothing to report other than the new age limit signs are now up. Cllr J. Harrison was thanked for installing them.

Cllr J Harrison then offered up some of his own costings for replacing existing rotting beams within the park. A cost of £1,700 was being aired for installation by a Wellington supplier. We could do this cheaper ourselves, but the park insurance would then be invalidated if we did so. Ongoing play park costs and associated repairs was briefly discussed and a reminder that financial grants do exist to assist parish councils who apply was made from the floor which was appreciated.

Cllr B Lenthall challenged this cost as being a bit excessive for four softwood beams and will investigate further when time allows. It should be noted that the cost of raw materials and labour has risen in the current market. The safety netting will therefore remain in place until works can be commenced or alternative action taken.

Tree growth is now interfering with the pyramid climbing frame was highlighted as an issue and Cllr B Lenthall agreed to undertake remedial action once time allowed.

145/11: POTENTIAL ORCHARD PORTMAN AREA DEVELOPMENT – This agenda item had already been discussed under the County Councillor report (see above). Cllr J Harrison said getting together with other parishes would be a good move once more is known.

146/11: AB031. AIRBAND TELEGRAPH POLE. CORFE PARISH CHURCH LOCATION UPDATE – Cllr J Harrison reported much frustration at being ignored in his many attempts to contact the relevant authority regarding this proposal. Residents are therefore encouraged to contact the company. The Parish Council have previously had conversations with Airband regarding the siting of this pole.

147/11: FINANCES

Cllr J Jackson provided a summary of the financial year to 31st March 2026 and thanked Karen Dewhirst for volunteering to undertake an internal audit.

During the year, total income was £29,776.64, which included amongst other things the annual precept of £11,550 and a payment from the Village Hall to cover the cost of the new AV system.

Total expenditure was £22,192.54, which included amongst other things insurance, the Village Hall floor repair, the AV system, and the cost of the new memorial.

During the year, the cash balance rose from £27,883 to £35,467, of which 97% was held in an interest paying account with the Skipton.

Cllr J Jackson also provided an update on finances as of 13th May 2026.

Since the last meeting on 18th March 2026, income of £6626.05 has been received, made up of: Precept for FY26/27 (half year, £5,775.00), Village Hall (50% of Zurich insurance – £637), and VAT Refund (£214.05).

Since the last meeting on 18th March 2026, the following payments of £1,616.56 have been made for: Chris Brown (£200 for admin in March/April), Zurich Insurance (£1274.29), and SALC (Annual Fees, £142.27).

Parish Council Funds are currently £41,879.82, held in the Santander current account (£3404.23) and at the Skipton Building Society (£38,475.59).

148/11: CORRESPONDANCE – Cllr J Harrison reported receiving correspondence from two residents regarding the proposed pole for Airband and regarding the continuing drain and gully problems and what actions were being taken to remedy both. Both issues were covered earlier in the meeting (see above).

There was also a resident request by Mr Robert (Rob) Hudson to fill the current vacant Councillor position following Cllr G Alexander's resignation. Following a brief introduction by Mr Hudson, this proposal was discussed on the night and was agreed.

149/11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS – The possible need for another dog poo bin was discussed following reports of poo bags being disposed of in hedges and on footpaths. Cllr R Hudson (newly elected) has agreed to champion this cause and will report back shortly on the subject. The display of signage in Mill Lane as then agreed on.

A new larger 'green bin' will be purchased to replace the tatty bin opposite the church. Cllr J Harrison has also been busy sourcing a possible new Parish noticeboard. Current costs could be £1,200 but the board should be long lasting being made from recycled materials. Once agreed full details of any new board will be circulated for resident comment.

The rewilding of a part of Queens Acre was also proposed. Those present were asked for an opinion on this proposal, with the idea shelved for now. An ongoing action remains to replace the wooden plaque that had the history labels on situated in Queens Acre. The issue is finding a large enough and suitable hard-wearing piece of wood for the work. Cllr J Harrison will endeavour to find a source with the help of other Councillors and residents.

Following the approval by the Parish Council of phase one of the war memorial works, a proposal to add further improvements to the memorial and surrounding area was shown to Councillors and residents present. AI technology was used to show a picture of what the finished vision could be. It should be noted councillors had only viewed this vision themselves on the previous day so comment from all was welcomed from the floor. After much discussion, some positive and some negative thoughts were expressed, and it was agreed by those present to send the proposal to residents via social media to view and comment. Hard copies will also be placed on the noticeboards for comment before any actions can be agreed upon, so please let us know your thoughts on this. Change is often alarming but the efforts of a few are very much appreciated in bringing this monument to life and helping the young of our village to appreciate the sacrifices made by former Corfe residents.

Cllr B Lenthall suggested the construction of a path along the church wall, close to the memorial, and repairs to the church path. Both could be carried out at the time of the electrical repairs.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 15 July 2026 at 6.00pm.