

SOCIETIES OF CORFE AGM – 13 May 2026

Apologies for Absence – Sue Ford (Corfe Quilters).

Minutes of 7 May 2025 – Viewed and Approved.

REPORTS OF THE PARISH ORGANISATIONS

CORFE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT (John Harrison)

I would like to thank SCC Councillors Sarah Wakefield and Ross Henley for their continued support and Somerset County Council updates. Also, the portfolio holders and their reports and Jaqueline Breslin for her regular play area inspections and reports. On the financial side, our precept has been held at the previous year's level and our financial position remains very healthy. A thank you to the speed watch team who have maintained regular monitoring of traffic speed which helps to make our village safer.

We have continued to be consulted on planning applications, two of which, the pub and Barton Grange, have been outstanding for some time. This year, we saw the cleaning of the war memorial, along with the addition of information plaques of the villagers fallen in the world wars. The chain has been refurbished, and we are awaiting further enhancement proposals and costings for consideration.

The play area goal was reduced in size, making it less attractive to over 12's from outside the village. We replenished the wood chippings in the play area – a regular safety measure. Rick Bosson was appointed as Tree Warden, and first report is available (see below).

This year there are already several works in progress including a Christmas light spur, new waste bin, noticeboard outside the church, timber replacement of the history plaque, and timber repair works on the play area. Continued chasing of Somerset Council regards clearing and jetting gullies is ongoing.

CORFE VILLAGE HALL and QUEENS ACRE COMMITTEE (Keith Gosling & Emma Bowers)

This year has been another busy and positive year. The Village Hall remains popular with the regular users and has seen another strong performance from the Community Café, together with very good attendance at the increasing number of village-based events.

A lot of work has been done in the last 12 months to install the solar panels, install a state of the art 'audio visual' system (AVS), and in replacing the old shipping container with a much more appropriate form of outside storage, as well as the usual day-to-day maintenance.

It has been encouraging to see some new people join the Committee, with Olivia Budge and Yvonne Cunnington getting involved with various responsibilities. However, the Committee still lacks a chairperson, and so these responsibilities continued to be shared between Emma Bowers as Secretary and Keith Gosling as Treasurer.

Income from normal activities over the year was £18,579, with key contributions of £7,672 from Café sales, £1,530 raised through running the '100 Club', and £938 being earned through interest on the Skipton Building Society Charity Account. Sadly, the Toddler Group has joined the Gardening Club and has decided to stop meeting. Other successful village events included wine tastings, pop-up pubs, a Burns Supper, a Ceilidh, pizza nights, as well as a winter market. Support is also given to fundraising events for the church, such as the supper evening.

Recurring costs were £14,922, mainly £7,465 from the Café, with £3,190 of this relating to the purchase of new equipment, including a new coffee machine and new small tables to replace the very old white ones that were no longer suitable for hall hires. Other key costs continue to be cleaning (with additional cleaning being undertaken from September) and electricity costs, although the solar panels have helped to keep price increases in check. Project and repair costs were £4,334, largely driven by the installation of the new outside storage, revarnishing the hall floor, and continued refurbishment costs. A full grant was received for the installation of the AV system, with an additional £1,352 spent to improve the microphone and visual delivery. This will broaden the appeal for hiring the hall to those who want to make presentations and run small workshops.

The Community Café continues to go from strength to strength and is now an established part of the village calendar. Both the alternate Thursday afternoons, and the once per month Saturday mornings, are very well attended and the separate Committee and rota of volunteers do a fantastic job. Apart from providing drinks, cakes, and snacks at great value prices, the Café has also supported various investments improving the Village Hall as already highlighted. Furthermore, since the café started, it has donated over £1,400 to various local and national charities, including a contribution to the war memorial refurbishment in the village by funding the cleaning of the chains surrounding the memorial. The Café provides a great opportunity for regular community connections for all village residents.

So, in summary, this has been a very busy year and much has been achieved, with the Village Hall being an excellent and well-used resource. Thanks are due to the small team of hard-working volunteers plus support from the Parish Council, all contributing to making the Hall an important hub for the Corfe community. The finances are in good shape and so will help to safeguard and improve this vital village amenity.

CORFE COMMUNITY TRUST (Keith Gosling)

Corfe Community Trust is a charity established in 1981 to help people living in Corfe who need support. We do this by making grants of money or by providing, or paying for, items, services or facilities for this purpose. Any surplus income can also be used for grants to support the Village Hall and Queens Acre as these facilities benefit the residents of Corfe. In terms of its operation this year, the Trust has seen a small surplus of income over expenditure. The income from the Charities Investment Fund has remained constant at around £3,000, and this year has seen additional interest of £188 earned from a Skipton Saving Account for Charities. Expenditure was just over £2,400, with around 70% of this being the Somerset Council Lifeline equipment provided for residents in the village. Support was provided for the Community Café and Village Hall through the provision of a wheelchair ramp. Other small amounts have been granted to villagers who needed financial assistance. Given the challenging times and uncertainties that still face a lot of people there may well be an increased need for support for people in the village and all requests

for assistance will be reviewed sympathetically, and confidentially, by the Trustees. Sadly, the Trust lost its chairman and friend this year, with Mr Ken Brown passing away in February. Mr Mervyn Hosking has been appointed as Chairman and Mr Simon Budge has agreed to be a new Trustee. This now means the Trustees are Mr Mervyn Hosking (Chairman), Ms Barbara Coombes, Mrs Helen Hinchliffe, Mr Jonathan Jackson and, shortly, Mr Simon Budge. Any of them can be contacted for advice if any cases of need are known, or alternatively you can contact the Clerk, Mr Keith Gosling.

CORFE, PITMINSTER, & ALMSHOUSE CHARITY (John Harrison)

The same residents are in occupation as the previous year, giving the charity stability. During the year we have taken on gardeners on a regular basis to tend the site perimeter and main garden area which has made a difference to the appearance of the houses. Also, a window cleaner has been appointed on a regular basis. The bathroom of No.2 has been refurbished and decorated, and this year No. 3's and 4's bathrooms will be assessed. Application has been made to the rent officer to assess a fair maintenance contribution as they have not been assessed for a few years due to Covid and the financial situation. The Charity is in a good financial state having a healthy bank balance of £114,000.

CORFE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB (Christine Bradbeer)

Corfe Short Mat Bowls Club has 15 members this year. We are having more friendly matches with local clubs, with return matches. We meet every Friday morning 10am to 12 midday and are happy for anyone to come and watch us and have a coffee. Although we are a serious team on the mat, we consider ourselves to be a friendly 'social club with bowls' and all ages are welcome to join us.

CORFE QUILTERS (Sue Ford)

We have had a busy quilting time enjoying working in the village hall. Our Bi-annual exhibition held last May was met by much enthusiasm from the visitors who attended. We raised £2,340 which was donated equally between the Salvation Army and Leukaemia UK in memory of two of our members who are no longer with us. Already we are thinking about the 2027 exhibition and preparing for that. Our membership has increased but still we no longer have a waiting list and would welcome anyone who would be interested in patchwork and quilting.

TREE WARDEN – (Rick Bosson)

Areas surveyed: Queens Acre, Mill Lane and Churchyard.

There have been a few changes since the last report. The 3 Limes are now 2 and the Austrian Pine at Corfe House has been felled. The previous report suggested felling the Limes and replanting. Is this really an option?

The last report stated the trees on Queens Acre could be labelled as a teaching aid but this has not been done for whatever reason. On to the survey.

The 6 conifers Cedrus Deodora, Nobel Fir, Cedar of Lebanon and Wellingtonias at Dunelm, South Woodside and Sharland appear to be in good health. The tallest have been Pollarded or Top lopped, whichever you prefer!

The English Oak (notable tree) also appears to be in as good a situation as can be expected.

The 2 Black Poplars are healthy but are rather choked with brambles and one has quite a lot of ivy growth. Being a scarce tree, some attention is required to ensure they remain in good condition.

Trees surveyed in Mill Lane are as follows: Lawson Cypress, Western Red Cedar x2, Monterey Cypress, Deodar Cedar, Tulip Poplar, Small leafed Lime, Atlas Cedar, and Ash. These are all in residents' gardens but appear healthy from the lane. The only tree with a preservation order on it as far as I am aware is the Small Leafed Lime and this is in good condition.

There are 25 trees in the Queens Acre. Moving anti clockwise from the village hall: Cherry Plum, Red Maple, European Mountain Ash, Post Oak, Horse Chestnut x2, English Oak, Horse Chestnut x2*, Large Leafed Lime*, Wild Cherry x2*, Norwegian Maple*, Horse Chestnut*, Whitebeam, Common Hornbeam, American Basswood, European Beach, Large Leafed Lime, Sweetgum tree, Swedish Whitebeam, English Oak, Horse Chestnut, French Maple, Horse Chestnut. All trees look to be in good health although those behind the playing field to the left (marked *) have ivy growing up the trunk.

I don't think the following are included in the survey, but I checked the trees on the private drive to Ballard, Bellevue, and Queens Acre Cottage and these were fine.

Adcombe Lane was not surveyed this time but will be next time, I hope.

THE BLACKDOWN BENEFICE – ST NICHOLAS CHURCH CORFE (Ann Jeffery)

Four meetings of the Church Council have been held since the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2025 – one informal and three formal meetings. Two of the most discussed topics at meetings have been safeguarding and finance. All members of the PCC have attended various safeguarding courses and some of these are ongoing. Finance of course is always on the agenda and we have held several exhibition events during last year – a very successful fundraising event was an art exhibition in the village hall organised by talented artist David Hinchcliffe which raised £1,625; a hog roast organised by the Halliday family at Corfe Barton which raised £2,217 and Fundraising Supper organised by Rosemary Gratton which raised £1,400. Gift Day held on 14th March raised £650 when Jim sat for several hours in a rather chilly Church. We received a substantial donation from the organisers of the Christmas Market held in December and a Quiz is planned for July with Quiz Master Christopher Poole. Various repairs have been completed to roof leaks, and the vestry is being re-decorated shortly. A communion Service is held in the Church on the fourth Sunday of each month and a gathering for Prayers led by Jim each Tuesday morning and, of course, there are the usual special Services for weddings, funerals and baptisms. Thanks, must be expressed to our diligent Rector, Jim; our reader Nick Lewis; Worship Leader Helen MacGregor; our faithful organist Shirley Grinter; our Churchyard mower Peter Arscott and our longstanding faithful cleaner Angela Yarde.