

MINUTES OF THE CORFE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, WEDNESDAY 30th September 2026 at 6pm.

PRESENT: Cllr. B Lenthall, Cllr. C Brown, Cllr. D Bradbeer, Cllr. J Jackson. Cllr S. Humphries. Cllr Rob Hudson

18 members of the public.

Vice - Chairman Cllr. B Lenthall opened the meeting at 6pm, welcoming all.

162/11: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. J Harrison.

163/11: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr. C Brown: Village Hall Committee. Cllr. J Jackson: Corfe Community Trust. Cllr R Hudson Village Hall Committee.

164/11: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD, WEDNESDAY 15th July 2026.

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

165/11: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES.

Nothing noted. Agenda items being discussed will address certain matters.

166/11: REPORTS OF COUNTY COUNCILLORS. - SCC Cllr S Wakefield of Somerset County Council (SCC) discussed topics from her September Report.

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Latest-SCC-Report-1.pdf>

SCC has decided to implement Sunday parking charges to generate extra funds. We debated why this was necessary given the risk of 'killing' Sunday trading. Cllr S Wakefield offered to outline the pros and cons of this action if residents wished to contact her.

Questions from the floor were raised regarding the old market site in Firepool which has been redundant for many years. Cllr S. Wakefield reported that a suitable development partner is being sought and that most of the area would, in time, become residential dwellings although flooding risk would need to be considered.

Cllr S Wakefield offered to help with flooding in Corfe due to collapsed drains. Although she may be able to speed up potential works, residents are encouraged to complain to the council directly for urgent remedial action. The current venting is proving pointless and costly and will not solve the issue until our drains are repaired. See further comments below.

The potential Orchard Portman development was aired and those present were asked to join with other Blackdown parishes in resisting any plans to create a new village. The Parish Council has agreed to support this view and awaits direction on what action to take. A representative will try to attend meetings when they are called, and we will take note of correspondence when circulated. Cllr S Wakefield highlighted that a proposal for a Garden Village at Orchard Portman had already been turned down by central Government. In addition, Somerset County Council are confident their target of 75K extra homes could be reduced to nearer 56k because the plan is

being reduced by five years. We should know more when a decision is made in September 2027. See further comments below.

167/11: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.

PLANNING: Cllr B Lenthall reported there were no new planning applications to consider.

HIGHWAYS: Cllr B. Lenthall – Reported that the B3170 Corfe Hill Road is showing signs of serious wear and tear. Wide cracks have now appeared in the road that are especially dangerous for cyclists. Minor repairs are likely to be ongoing, with full details published once timeframes have been identified for the works to commence.

Corfe Hill has a 7.5-ton vehicle weight limit. However, it has been noted that some serious heavy traffic has been passing through the village. Residents are encouraged to make a note of the time, details of the lorry/load name, and direction. This should be reported to our speed watch team who can let the relevant authorities know.

RIGHTS OF WAY: Cllr D. Bradbeer – Nothing new to report. The ground remains extremely hard following drought.

WEBSITE: Cllr J Jackson – Reported 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.

VILLAGE HALL: Mrs Emma Bowers reported the hall is an extremely popular venue within the Taunton area and bookings in August and September had been very high. Car parking has been heavy on occasion, probably due to the newly formed toddler group which has attracted members from outside the village. It was noted that parking on grass verges had been witnessed but that new organisers had themselves added some new signs to make those responsible more aware especially given the need for access for emergency vehicles.

Grants for solar batteries are being investigated following the success of the solar panels. It should save money and promote a greener image for the hall. The hall is also proposing to construct a veranda over the patio area to help utilise this space better. Once full plans are known, these will be displayed for public comment. The Parish Council has been kept informed.

Here are the minutes from the latest committee meeting:

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Corfe-VH-Minutes-10.09.26.pdf>

GREEN PORTFOLIO – We still currently are without a green portfolio holder. No green issues were raised at this meeting by those present. Cllr R Hudson has offered to champion any suggestions to the Council.

ALMSHOUSE CHARITY SELICKS GREEN REPORT – Cllr J Harrison was absent on this occasion. Nothing new to report.

QUEENS ACRE AND PLAY AREA – Cllr S Humphries is aware of remedial works required on some of the apparatus due to rotting wood in places.

Taunton Timber had previously been sourced as our supplier by Cllr J Harrison. An order should have been placed, and this will be confirmed. Hardwood beams made of oak will be more expensive, but it is hoped they will last for longer than the softwood ones we currently have. A previous meeting had agreed this course of action.

A playground inspection has now taken place, and items have been identified for action. It should be noted that none of these were identified as red (immediate action required). All items will be addressed, and volunteers will be sought to assist Cllr S Humphries in completing the tasks required.

Local residents have come forward who are prepared to seek out playground grants now the park is showing signs of ageing. Our thanks go to them for these efforts. Queens Acre remains a very popular venue for children and adults alike and, as such, it will be looked after accordingly.

168/11: POTENTIAL ORCHARD PORTMAN AREA DEVELOPMENT FURTHER UPDATE – Cllr B Lenthall asked those present if they had any further questions after listening to Cllr S Wakefield regarding the issue. It was previously agreed that Corfe would join with other affected parishes in a united effort to ensure the best possible outcome. Cllr. S Wakefield encouraged us to participate in these discussions as much as possible. Cllr R Hudson offered to be our point of contact, so any concerns should be addressed to him.

169/11: AB031. AIRBAND TELEGRAPH POLE. CORFE PARISH CHURCH LOCATION FURTHER UPDATE – The proposed erection of telegraph poles in front of the church by Airband has now been withdrawn following full fibre installation (underground) works by Open Reach. Airband will now therefore be ‘piggy backing’ via these cables once their service comes into action.

170/11: WAR MEMORIAL REFURBISHMENT PROJECT FURTHER UPDATE – Cllr J Harrison and Cllr C Brown had previously informed residents of the results of the poll on the War Memorial Refurbishment project. A separate meeting with the refurbishment team has been held via an extraordinary meeting to discuss a way forward. However, it was noted that certain permissions from all relevant bodies associated with the monument would first be required before any further works could be approved/paid for. These are currently being sought. In the meantime, all works on the war memorial have been halted for the immediate future. Further questions raised from within the residents’ poll that needed to be addressed were being considered but it was felt that to continue trying to find solutions to these before the planning position had been addressed would be pointless.

Cllr Lenthall asked Mr Nigel Furniss to reinstall the posts and refit chains ahead of Remembrance Day.

171/11: FINANCES – Cllr J Jackson provided an update on finances as of 30th September 2026.

Since the last meeting on 15th July 2026, income of £5,775 has been received from Somerset County Council for the second half of the annual precept.

Since the last meeting on 15th July 2026, payments of £903.90 have been made for: Chris Brown (admin in July/August, £200), play park and bins (£75), Parsons (Grass cutting, £184.30), SCC

(Dog Poo Bin collection, £54.60), PFK Littlejohn (annual audit, £252), and play park (annual inspection, £138).

Parish Council Funds are currently £44,056.26, held in a Santander current account (£5,746.42) and at the Skipton Building Society (£38,309.84).

Audit - we have passed our external audit for the financial year to April 2026. In the auditor's opinion, the information we provided was in accordance with proper practices and no other matters came to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. All the relevant forms and certificates can be found on the Corfe village website.

Precept – we need to consider and formally approve our 2027/28 precept. The final deadline for the return of our completed Precept form is 29 January 2027. Cllr Jackson suggested that the Parish Council think about this issue between now and our next meeting in November and agree a figure at that meeting. Note that the Precept has been held at the same level of £11,550 for the last two years.

172/11: CORRESPONDENCE – Cllr C Brown reported correspondence received regarding an outdoor table tennis table at Queens Acre, for which grant funding would be sought. There was no objection in principle by those present, although the positioning and cost of the table should be investigated further. This could perhaps be combined with some ongoing improvement works for the play area already being proposed by another resident (see above).

Cllr C Brown also reported an email from a concerned resident objecting to the proposed extra car parking behind the church or to the rear of Queens Acre on land currently being offered for use by Mr J Halliday. At present, negotiations are ongoing and a detailed plan is being drawn up with Mr Halliday and the Village Hall. When complete, this will be shared with the Parish Council and any concerned residents. Usual planning permissions would need to be sought for a decision to proceed with the project. All affected parties will have time to comment via the usual planning channels. Clarification on how many car parking spaces were being sought was expressed by a member of the audience, who was concerned this would become a permanent and large extra car park and not an occasional overflow space. The view was that an extra 10-12 spaces would be created. Views from the floor were then expressed both in favour and against. The alternative of parking on the road was aired but this was seen as dangerous.

Another email highlighted concerns over the continuing blockages of our drains and the flooding as a result. Other residents highlighted the potential collapse of some drains within the village. Historical remedies and a determination to seek some resolution was then debated by those present. It is hoped that remedial works could be sanctioned by SCC as soon as is financially possible. Cllr S Wakefield and our resident flood warden will continue to seek this action on our behalf.

173/11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS – Cllr R Hudson reported that a CERT for Corfe has been created and was available to view on our website.

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Corfe-Parish-Council-CERT-AUGUST-2026.pdf>

This details contacts and actions in times of emergency and is a volunteer system. Any volunteers who own a 4 x 4 and feel they could respond in an emergency should contact our representative Mrs Hayley Smith who will store your details safely. Emergencies will be responded to if, for instance, only 4 x 4 driving has been sanctioned by Highways/Police at times of severe weather and always at Mrs Smith and the volunteer's discretion.

A further survey is being conducted by SCC asking if Somerset is 'prepared'. Within it, questions on preparedness of local communities to national emergencies are being asked to help create a safer community across Somerset. It is like our CERT but is asking for a more expansive overview of how we would respond in times of trouble. A SCC plan has been outlined in which residents prepare for times of war and food or fuel shortages, suggesting that in being prepared you should have at least two weeks of food available in tins, dry food, etc. Oil tanks should remain topped up and alternative water supplies should perhaps be sought.

Cllr R Hudson finished by reporting that he had sourced some dog poo bin location signs and they would be going up shortly. It was then reported from the floor that horses had been fouling the footpaths within the village.

The audience also asked who was responsible for the maintenance of footpaths as pedestrians were struggling at times to walk due to uneven surfaces and mud. Somerset Highways are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of footpaths within our Village. If concerned, please contact them and cc in your Parish Council, as together we may be able to achieve a result.

The Church footpath from the main road to the church gates was discussed. Quotes are being sought for repair work by Cllr Lenthall.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 25th November 2026 at 6.00pm.