

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Chaffcombe held in the Village Hall on
Monday 20th April 2026 at 7.30 p.m.

Attendance and Apologies

Those present:

Mrs M Butler (Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council)
Mr R Bale (Chaffcombe Parish Council)
Mr D Bracher (Councillor Chaffcombe Parish Council)
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)
6 members of the public

Apologies - Mr S Robinson, Mrs G Wills

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Chard Reservoir - New Wall and at the Reservoir

The wall at the Reservoir has been built and the road was re-opened by August. The contractors were very helpful and disruption was kept to a minimum. A pedestrian gate was installed by the Anglers Car Park which means there is now 24/7 access for pedestrians and wheelchair users.

The building of the wall meant that the footpath which ran alongside the Reservoir was removed. It is hoped that the path can be re-installed and there is movement on funding to do this.

A Friends of the Reservoir group has been set up with regular meetings and social events and is proving popular.

The very wet winter caused flooding at the Reservoir with much of the site inaccessible due to flooded paths. The hide was half submerged under water which is something that has been unheard of.

Hannah Stanton, the Ranger, reported that a lot of work has been undertaken to erect bird boxes and to run community events.

Footpaths

Monthly walks continued through much of the year but had to be stopped during the winter months due to the persistent rain.

The high stile at the top of Sprays Hill has been replaced with a timber kissing gate and two timber stiles behind Little Paintmore have been replaced with metal kissing gates. Work has been carried out to the footpath from Gaylards Lane to Paintmoor Lane so that what was once a wet and boggy path in the winter is now in good order.

Highways

Ongoing problems with blocked drains, potholes etc have all been reported to Highways and a number of problems have been successfully dealt with. Potholes are particularly bad this year due to the wet weather.

The temporary barrier at the bridge was completed although not as successfully as hoped. A gap has been left between the barrier and the bridge and a sandbag has been put in the gap to close it. The barrier sticks out quite a long way.

The crack in the railway bridge has been reported to Somerset Council who have said it is not a problem at the moment.

Speeding in the Village

Following a request, the Clerk asked Highways to consider a speed limit for Chaffcombe. Traffic Management said that speed records for Chaffcombe show that the mean recorded speeds range between 11.1 mph and 24.7 mph with no history of injury collisions and that therefore Chaffcombe does not meet the criteria for the introduction of a speed limit.

Flooding

The attenuation pond on land at the top of Knapps Lane which was completed last year, plus the new drainage work in Knapps Lane has worked well during the heavy persistent rain in January and February.

Mike Otterbeck has agreed to act as Flood Warden together with Cllr David Bracher.

Following the flooding last January, holes were knocked in the wall of the Village Hall Car Park which should prevent the Hall from flooding in the future.

A meeting was held with FWAG and Highways to look at the possibility of creating a second attenuation pond in Summer Lane but at the moment this will not go ahead.

Drains have been cleared and there was no flooding at Chaffcombe Gate.

A new supply of sandbags has been bought by the Parish Council.

Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) are being re-organised and their long-term future and relevance is being considered.

Cllr Geraldine Wills attends the meetings to represent Chaffcombe Parish Council.

Somerset Council

Somerset Council has managed to balance its budget this year but is still in serious financial trouble with a large deficit. A number of staff have been made redundant. The Council hopes to make more savings by the greater use of technology.

The Boundary Commission has reported.

Both of our Somerset Councillors are on long term sick leave.

Charges are now being made for emptying the dog waste bins. Only those not on Somerset Council land will be charged so Chaffcombe will need to pay for just the one bin on the wall of the Village Hall Car Park.

Orchard Plot

The brambles have been cut in November and will be done each year in the winter before the snowdrops flower.

Planning

There have been two planning applications in March and one last September.

Precept

This was increased to £4,000 this year to cover the cost of emptying the dog waste bins.

Website

Our webmaster Lewis Bates died suddenly in October and I would like to pay tribute to all the work he did as a volunteer over many years to create and administer the Chaffcombe website. Emma Thomas has agreed to take over as webmaster and has migrated the website to a new provider.

A new regulation came into force this March which requires the Clerk of the Parish Council to have an email address linked to a website maintained by the Parish Council. Emma has set this up.

Banking

Lloyds are now charging £4.25 per month service charge. Many of the high street banks are also charging for business accounts. We are looking into setting up an internet only bank account without a service charge.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of the Parish: my fellow parish councillors, our two unitary councillors, our volunteer Footpath Warden, our volunteer Flood Warden, our volunteer website administrator, our Clerk and everyone else in the village, too many to name, who give their time to make Chaffcombe a wonderful place to live.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were available and were signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. Public Voice.

(a) The purpose of the Annual Meeting

Cllr Butler explained that it is a legal requirement to hold an Annual Meeting each year. It is a public meeting chaired by the Chair of the Parish Council and it is so that residents can bring concerns to the attention of the Parish Council.

(b) Roads and Drains

Cllr Bracher said that he and a resident are collecting evidence regarding the state of the roads and drains and how it affects flooding. They will present this at the next parish council meeting. One issue is that the water is not getting into the drains. Another is that the ditch which used to collect water is now full. There is a lot of damage to the roads caused by the wet winter but Highways do not have enough money for all the repairs necessary.

(c) Paintmoor Lane

This is a restricted byway. The bridge has been damaged by heavy vehicles, particularly the refuse lorry. It was noted that Touches Lane has been repaired and that this is in Chard.

(d) Drug use

A resident noted that drugs are being smoked in the layby, often in the early evenings and often on Fridays. It is not a regular occurrence. If noted it should be reported to the Police.

(e) Pedestrians

It was noted that it is safer for pedestrians to walk on the right side of the road, facing the oncoming traffic.

The meeting finished at 7.55 p.m.

Mary Butler
Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council.