

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 18th May 2026 at 7.30 p.m.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Those present:	Apologies	In Attendance
Mrs M Butler (Chair)	Mrs S Osborne (Somerset	6 Members of the public
Mr R Bale	Councillor)	
Mr D Bracher	Mr Tony Gray (PPL0)	
Mr S Robinson	Mrs V Keitch (Somerset	
Mrs G Wills	Councillor)	
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)	Mr M Otterbeck	

2. Election of the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Robinson proposed Cllr Butler as Chair, seconded by Cllr Wills. All councillors were in favour and Cllr Butler was duly elected as Chair of the Parish Council.

3. Declaration of acceptance of office by the Chair

Cllr Butler signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

4. Election of the Vice Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Robinson nominated Cllr Wills as Vice Chair, seconded by Cllr Bale. All councillors were in favour and Cllr Wills was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

5. Report by Somerset Councillor

Cllr Osborne has been on sick leave so there was no report.

6. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held on Mon 17/02/26

The minutes were approved and were signed by the Chair.

7. Review Insurance cover and inventory of land and assets.

Insurance cover is with Clear Councils Insurance, There have been no changes to the assets held by the Parish Council.

8. Review Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment - No changes were proposed.

9. Review Membership of external organisations.

Currently the Parish Council is a member of SALC and also pays an annual fee to the Information Commissioner (ICO) by direct debit. It was agreed that membership of SALC is essential and the Parish Council will continue its subscription.

10. Dates and times of ordinary Council meetings for year ahead.

It was agreed to continue with meetings every 3 months on the third Monday of the month. Dates for the year ahead are:

- 17th August 2026
- 16th November 2026
- 15th February 2027
- 17th May 2027
- Parish Meeting on Monday 19th April 2027.

All dates are free and booked with the Village Hall.

11. Planning Applications

2 applications have been considered since the last meeting. The Parish Council had no objections to either application.

- 11.1 Application Number: 26/00496/FUL
Proposal: Change of use of barn into holiday let accommodation, + associated works.
Location: Higgins Farm Tolleys Lane Lydmarsh Chard Somerset TA20 4AD
- 11.2 Application Number: 26/00418/FUL
Proposal: Erection of a single private dwelling
Location: Sunshine Mill House Chaffcombe Road Chard Somerset TA20 1RR

12. Footpaths

Chaffcombe Parish Council PPLO Footpath Report

10th May 2026

Since my last report parish footpath walks have been carried out as the weather has allowed with no major issues to report. The need for repairs to styles on the footpath from Lydmarsch to Youngs Copse and also to the bridge over the stream to Sprays Hill have been reported to the Rights of Way Ranger for action.

A question was asked about whether Somerset Council are still doing style maintenance and the answer is that they are putting in gates.

Anthony Gray Chaffcombe Parish PPLO

12.1 Paintmoor Lane Bridge

The problem with the bridge is that Paintmoor Lane is a private road and has not been adopted by Highways. It should be maintained by the residents. Highways will contribute £2,000 towards the repair. The bridge has been weak for a long time.

13. Reservoir

Report summary from Hannah Stanton, Countryside Ranger at the Reservoir:

"It seems as though summer has arrived here at the reservoir, despite the rise and fall of temperatures, and unpredictable weather. We have seen a combination of swallows, house martins and sand martins skimming over the water catching those emerging insects. A Marsh Harrier was recorded on a Sunday in April which is quite a rarity here at the reserve - not a first but uncommon all the same! Coal tits have been seen nesting in the old cracks and crevices of the boathouse - that is something I have not seen first hand before. And as of yesterday, we have noted juvenile kingfishers around the water's edge and perching on the willow near the hide with a parent, as well as visiting families of Canada Geese. We are quite hopeful we should see some young ducklings of various species including the Great Crested Grebes emerging soon....

The wildlife surveyors have begun their butterfly surveys, and are having a steady record each week of various species, including Orange Tips (who favour the sweet little Cuckoo Flower in the meadows), Commas, Red Admirals, Speckled Woods, and a few other species. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we have a good influx of them this year!

The practical volunteers have begun a regime of repainting benches, map panels and even the eco loo as part of the summer schedule of works. They have been working on a 'plane project' as well, as a new feature of the playzone - the money raised from a sponsored cycle ride carried out by Inspire Adult Learning Service has allowed this project to come to fruition. Watch this space! Other tasks in the playzone have been done, including installing a 'mud kitchen' donated by a local resident and revamping Edd's (our Community Ranger) outdoor forest school area. I have recently taken on a couple of work placement students, who we hope will benefit from their time here and lead them on to success in the future with their careers.

The Friends of Chard Reservoir have been growing support in the local community, either by donations or by running fundraising events to provide support to future community projects at the reservoir. If you wish to be involved or know about future events, please find them on Facebook or contact friendsofchardreservoir@outlook.com

We have some family-friendly drop in sessions during the summer as well as other events, so please do keep your eyes out for posters or online adverts for them, but to give you some dates of some of the future events, please see below:

*Friday 29th May (May Half Term) - All Natural Artwork with Edd Chilcott - £6.50 per child - booking essential

*Friday 5th June - Nettle Cordage Bracelet Making - £10 per adult - booking essential

*Tuesday 7th July - Walk on the Wild Side - £6.50 per child - booking essential

*Friday 24th July - Photography Walk with Carolyn Lefley and Edd Chilcott - £12 per person - booking essential

Thursday 6th August - Pop Up Planes - FREE drop in session

Friday 28th August - Bug Bonanza - FREE drop in session

*For our bookable sessions, please contact countryside@somerset.gov.uk or websearch Digitickets Chard Reservoir for more information or to book your place."

Cllr Bracher is a link with the volunteers and has been to their meetings. He urged people to get involved and join the group.

14. Highway matters.

14.1 Potholes

Mike Otterbeck reported that he continues to report the potholes and some have been repaired. So far this year they have repaired 14 that he has reported making 5 visits to do so. Potholes have been marked with white circles and often the rain washes the marking away. Cricket Lane is in a bad condition.

14.2 Drains

The drains are being cleared regularly. Cllr Bracher reported that they have taken photos of the drain outside Kerris Vean and it is clear that the drain is not at the right level. Over the years the surface has changed and the water is missing the drain and flowing down the road. Highways needs to look at this, ideally when there is water flowing on the road. The drain goes into the field which is too high. The Clerk to report this to Highways. **ACTION - The Clerk**

14.3 Railway Bridge

The railway bridge is maintained by the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (WWCT) (formerly Sustrans) under the terms of an easement with Historic Railway Estate (HRE). They are aware of the crack and have no immediate concerns. The bridge is checked once a year.

The leases for the greenway will be expiring in 2030 and WWCT will not renew them unless there is support for the maintenance of the route from other parties. To date Chard Town Council have been assisting with verge cutting and there have been initial steps made to establish a Friends group. The only body with the ability to take on responsibility for the bridge at Chaffcombe Lane is the County Council. Since the County Council already maintain the bridge at Manor Farm between Chard and Knowle St Giles it makes sense for it to take on the bridge at Chaffcombe Lane as well. Cllr Wills is in touch with the Friends of the Cycle Track and is considering getting our local MP involved.

15. Flooding

There was no flooding during the recent rain.

16. LCN Meetings

Cllr Bracher attended the March meeting in Crewkerne which dealt mainly with flooding and the new housing estate east of Crewkerne. Somerset Council have heard how Chaffcombe has resolved the issue of flooding in the village and praised the work which has been done. There is a new organiser for the LCNs who is more pro-active. There is a lot of information available which is easy to access.

There is an update on the local plan which is online.

The Eastern Relief Road is being discussed and a meeting is being set up by Adam Dance MP.

17. Website and email address

The website has been moved to a new host - Krystal. The price is reasonable and there is more memory and email addresses. There have been some technical issues and the Clerk still cannot access the website to put items on or the email address. There were complications with malware on the old site and changes were being made and unrelated adverts appearing. Our new webmaster has been putting documents on the website.

In the last 2 weeks the problems seem to have been sorted out and the malware cleaned up. All photos now have the correct information and the site is fully compatible. The Clerk to arrange a meeting to sort out access and the email. **ACTION - The Clerk**

18. Presentation and approval of accounts to year end 31/03/2026

Accounts to 31/3/2026 were distributed by email and approved by Councillors and signed by the Chair

19. Approval of Certificate of Exemption from a limited assurance review

The income and expenditure did not exceed £25,000 so the Council can declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review. Councillors were in agreement and the Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Chair.

20. Annual Governance Review - This was approved and signed by the Chair.

21. Approval of Annual Accounting Statements to year end 31/03/2026

This was approved and signed by the Chair.

22. Internal Audit - The Internal Audit will be done in the next few weeks.

23. Payments and receipts

(a) The precept of £4,000 has been received.

(c) The following online payments were made:

30/04/2026	SALC	Subscription	£ 105.98
30/04/2026	Clear Councils	Insurance	£514.07
17/05/2026	S Morley	Clerk	£ 176.09
17/05/2026	HMRC	Paye	£ 37.40
17/05/2026	I Butler	Website	£ 12.74

24. Matters and Items to Report

(a) Cllr Bracher to follow up the report about the lights from the football ground in Chard which was raised at a previous meeting. **ACTION - Cllr Bracher**

(b) The hole on the A30 by Lydmarsch is being repaired. There are traffic lights at the moment.

25. Date of next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council

The next Ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council will be on Monday 17th August 2026 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.15 p.m.

Mary Butler - Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council-