

EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

11th February 2026 7pm held at East Coker Pre School

Attending Councillors: Cllr Cowen, Cllr Costello, Cllr Mead, Cllr Walker, Cllr Hall, Cllr Sugg, Cllr Wintersgill, Cllr Carter Uren, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Chauveau & Clerk

26/22 There were apologies from Cllr Hodge for non-attendance.

26/23 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting which was held on the 8th January 2026 were approved. **Proposed:** Cllr Wintersgill **Seconded:** Cllr Chauveau **Vote:** All agreed **Action:** Clerk to publish

26/24 Cllr Cowen Declared an interest on planning application 25/02755/OUT

26/25 Public Question Time

a 1 member of the public was present and spoke about her objection to planning application 25/02755/FUL.

b No Unitary Councillors were present

26/26 Chair's Report Chair advised we had two volunteers who can help keep book swap in the bus stop tidy from time to time. Any other help would be appreciated though.

26/27 100 Club numbers were drawn 1st 34 2nd 21 3rd 6 **Action:** Clerk to update winner and pay.

26/28 To discuss and make observations on SC Planning Applications

a **15/01000/OUT Location:** Keyford. Nothing to report as yet. Still waiting for Somerset Council Planning Committee Meeting

b **24/02237/OUT Location:** The rejection of the planning application for 14 business units in Halves Lane has been appealed. This appeal has not yet been validated by Somerset Council. If it is validated, we will have 5 weeks to make our comments.

C 25/02755/FUL Location: Lyneham Bungalow, Coker Court **Application:** Demolition of outbuilding/lean-to, alterations and extension of an existing dwelling and erection of a church hall (Place of Worship)

Cllr Cowen read out part of an email from the Church Warden wanting to make it clear that despite inferences in the application documents there was no connection with St Michael's Church and that the planned building should not be called a Church Hall but a Meeting Place. Cllr Cowen stood down and left meeting. Cllr Walker took over the meeting.

Cllr Costello said that he could not see the need for another Meeting Hall in the area as there were already 2 Plymouth Brethren meeting rooms in the parish. He also commented that the meeting room was unsightly in its design and there were no windows on the plans and said this does not conform to building regs. Cllr Mead said that the steepness of the drive was questionable, and as materials proposed was gravel this would just wash down the hill and onto the lane. He said that there are only 10 parking spaces proposed which he thought unrealistic and worried that cars would end up parking along Back Lane which is very narrow. Cllr Sugg said it would have a detrimental impact to the Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed buildings which surround that conservation area. The entrance was also of concern to Cllr's as it was felt that more of the wall would need to be removed, to allow better access, and in contravention of the planning restrictions placed on the retrospective planning approval given for the drive entrance in 2022. The bungalow footprint is also bigger than the current building and the 'roof height' higher and this would block light to the current properties at the rear of the site.

Proposal: The proposed application sits within a conservation area, in close proximity to both grade 1 and grade 2 listed properties. There is limited access and additional traffic on a

narrow lane is of great concern. Steepness of drive with regards to access, water run off and concerns about surface material washing out. - Insufficient parking would result in overflow onto local roads and limit the usefulness of the hall to other users. The applicant listed use on Sundays and Mondays only, meaning the hall would not be for community use;. There is no need for such a development in the village as similar meeting halls already exist within the area. Raised position of the hall and height of the residential building would dominate the surroundings and the proposed design and the proposed material are not in keeping with the surrounding area. This application contradicts ECCN1, ECCN 2 ECCN3 of the East Coker Neighbourhood Plan. **Proposed:** Cllr Mead **Seconded:** Cllr Costello **Vote** 9 in favour **Action** Clerk to update Somerset Planning.

Cllr Cowen rejoined the meeting.

26/27 To consider any recent planning applications from Somerset Council (South), received in the days after the agenda has been circulated and prior to this meeting. **Interested public and parish councillors; please refer to (South) Somerset Council planning portal for details of planning items that might be discussed under this item:**

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/>

26/29 January Planning Decisions 25/00205/ FULL Yeovil Court-Withdrawn

26/30 No Memorial Requests

26/31 Matters for discussion and resolution:

Bench at Cemetery. Cllr Cowen advised this item had been brought back to the meeting as further information had come to light. The bench was originally reported as broken, therefore unsafe, and impeding grave space, however on inspection this was found to be incorrect as the bench is only a few months old and placed up against the hedge. He also reported that he had spoken to the family who installed the bench and they apologised for not gaining the correct permissions prior to the placement, and said they were unaware they needed to do so. Cllr Sugg and Cllr Mead both said that the bench was not sturdy in its construction. Cllrs were also unaware at the last meeting that there were another 2 benches at the cemetery, one of which had been there for a long time and the other which Cllr Sugg said was installed after covid. Clerk was unsure of permissions being granted for that one but will check historic minutes. Cllr Mead advised she met the family at Cemetery after covid prior to that one being placed. It was decided that Cllrs would visit the cemetery and see the bench and this item will be added to the next meeting to decide if it will be possible for the bench to remain. **Action:** Cllr Cowen will update the family. Clerk to check previous ECPC meeting minutes to see if permission for any other benches had been granted in the recent past. She will also update the Cemetery policy to make it clearer that permission must be sought from the council in advance of any parishioner wishing to place a bench there.

Collapsed drain outside School. Highways have confirmed that emergency works will take place in April to repair this area. They predict that the road will need to be closed for at least 4 weeks.

Mill Lane visibility. Somerset Traffic have attended the site, to see if visibility can be improved, however feel that very little can be done due to a large wall on the left-hand side of the lane and lack of anywhere to place a visibility mirror or signpost. Clerk will ask Somerset Traffic if it is possible to paint 'SLOW' on the road surface in that vicinity.

Flooding in the village. Cllr Walker advised that he thought the environmental agency were replacing the 'trash Screens' in Meadow View and Sawmills and had concerns that this could

possibly lead to further flooding of the Sawmills. It was decided he would write to the Environmental Agency flagging these concerns.

26/32 Correspondence received from Somerset Council. Clerk advised that ECPC were due to receive a further and final CIL payment of £2,604 for the development at Tellis Cross.

26/32 Discuss Parishioner Correspondence. Clerk received an email from a parishioner regarding the runoff water and mess in the road at Placket Lane and Paviots Lane. Cllr Mead said it was so bad due to the crop in the surrounding fields being harvested, and as the field was not ploughed straight away, when the heavy rains came the lane was covered in mud from the run-off.

26/33 Clerks Report Clerk requested the following leave 17th to 19th February 17th to 19th March and 7th to 9th April all of which was approved. She advised that she would not be at the 8th April meeting.

Clerk advised that she had finally had a response from Somerset Council regarding the transfer of title to the Tellis Cross play area and had been in touch with a solicitor. She reported the conveyancing will cost between £4,000 and £9,000 dependant on what level of due diligence we require. Cllr Mead requested she gets another 2 quotes from other solicitors.

Clerk asked that all Cllr have their new email addresses working by March.

26/34 Working group updates

The Pavilion Modernisation. Cllr Costello advised that the lights which have been fitted in the changing rooms are incorrect and these will be replaced as per the design spec. Cllr Mead requested Clerk apply for a smart meter for electricity to be installed and whether the Pre-School could benefit from the electricity produced by the solar panels or whether it would be solely for the main pavilion building. He also requested that she organise having the septic tank emptied. Cllr Wintersgill suggested that an update be made of the expenditure on the Pavilion Project be compared to the money raised, as several extras had become necessary. Cllr Cowen asked that a Pavilion Modernisation Committee meeting be held to evaluate this and to report back at the next council meeting.

1 A Parishioner had very kindly donated £7964 to the Pavillion Modernisation Project. Clerk said she had written a thank you email and had discussed with Cllr Hodge how we recognise this very generous donation. Cllr Hodge will contact them to discuss this further. Cllr Sugg suggested a plaque. **Action:** Cllr Hodge to speak to Parishioner.

Parish Communications: Cllr Chauveau advised that last month the website had been visited 973 times which was a significant increase on previous months and showed the recent changes made were worthwhile. She asked Cllr Carter-Uren to update the information on the 100 club. She said she would like to start putting more information out on the Coker Post. Cllr Wintersgill said she would speak to the Web Master about the MailChimp system, as currently she was unable to post anything without going through the WebMaster. Cllr Carter-Uren asked that Cllrs send her any information for the Society Newsletter by the beginning of March.

LCN Cllr Haigh advised that the next LCN meeting is to be held on the 18th March and he will attend and report back.

26/35 Finance

To approve the monthly items of expenditure and those paid under delegated powers.

Proposed: Cllr Carter Uren **Seconded:** Cllr Hall **Vote:** All Agreed **Action:** Clerk to pay.

Clerk reported that the Ranger had requested to increase his hourly rate as of April 2026. She advised this was the first increase in 2 years. Cllr Sugg said that he does a wonderful job

Commented [HC1]: I can't remember what we decided about this – was it going to be too expensive to arrange, or were we going to consult EDF?

and the increase was understandable, given ever increasing costs to him **Proposed:** Cllr Carter Uren **Seconded:** Cllr Walker **Vote:** All Agreed **Action:** Clerk to advise the Ranger.

26/36 To discuss and identify Highways Issues Potholes are still a great concern in the parish and Clerk will contact Highways regarding Yeovil Road, Mill Lane and Long Furlong Lane.

Cllr Walker reported that there is raw sewage in the ditch along Moor Lane towards the Sewage Works. This had evidently been caused by the recent heavy rain causing (permitted) overflow systems to allow raw sewage to be piped into the ditch. As this ditch is blocked in several places the contaminated water has nowhere to go and would lie in the ditch for a long time. This is clearly a safety hazard, and the ditches need to be dug out **Action:** Cllr Cowen to write to Wessex Water about this matter. All Cllr Agreed.

Cllr Walker had also asked Clerk to contact Highways about the very poor work which was undertaken when re surfacing Halves Lane and Mill Close. She advised that she had reported this to Highways back in January and raised concerns with Unitary Cllr Patrick but would chase up to see what was happening.

There is a trailer illegally parked outside Veranda Cottage, Main Street in East Coker. Clerk to write to household and request that it is removed.

26/37 To discuss and identify items for the Village Ranger

26/38 Agenda items for the next meeting which will be on the 11th March 2026 at East Coker Pre School

Bench at Cemetery, updating of the Neighbourhood Plan