

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 26th May 2026 at the Moorland Hall

Present: Councillors Eric Norman (Chair), Jon Levenson, Hazel Crockford

In attendance: Liz Stitt – Clerk, Cllr Frances Nicholson (Somerset Council), Cllr Steven Pugsley (Somerset Council), Alison Blackmore (Headteacher of Cutcombe First School), Jill Thompson (Chair of Moorland Hall & Recreation Ground), David Weir (St John's Church) + 4 members of the public

Item	Minutes
1	Parish Council Chair's Welcome. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Norman, Cllr Oliver Yiend, Cllr Roger Foxwell and Cllr Sarah Cook.
2	To Approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors held on 27th of May 2024. These were approved and signed.
3	<p>Chair's report on the work of the Parish Council during the past year.</p> <p>We have had quite a challenging year due to the tragedy that happened with the bus crash. The Parish Council is eternally grateful to everyone that came together on that day, the Teachers, Paramedics, Ambulances, Fire Brigade, Exmoor Search and Rescue and the Police for their sterling work when it happened. We are holding a memorial service on the 25th of June at 3.30pm at the playing field, in remembrance of Oliver Price who sadly lost his life and for other children who had life changing injuries who have formally been invited to join. We thank Somerset Highways for donating a tree which is planted in the playing field, to stop people leaving floral tributes at the accident site. David Yiend has kindly donated some wood and the Parish Council are paying for the labour to make a bench to go near the tree for people to be able to sit and reflect. The Price family have been consulted as to the wording they would like on some plaques for the seat and tree. We thank the Moorland Hall Trustees for allowing the tree to be planted on the playing field. David Weir will be blessing the tree at the service and offering condolences to everyone affected by the tragedy.</p> <p>The proposed housing development behind the Moorland Hall which has been ongoing for years now, has been passed, but the Parish Council is still waiting to receive the traffic management plan from the developers.</p> <p>It is the first year in four years that the Parish Council has had to raise the precept. There was only a small increase which was due mainly to inflation.</p> <p>We have an active tenant in the rental unit by the public toilets. We added a lean to which was done extremely well by Exmoor Welding and the tenant is very happy.</p> <p>The crossroads remain a major headache for everyone. We have been looking into possibly raising the curbstones around the crossroads. Highways have put in a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the junction banning left turns for 7.5 tonne vehicles from the B3224 Taunton direction heading onto the A396 towards Dulverton direction. This would then make it a legally enforceable order (excluding agricultural vehicles) prohibiting 7.5 tonne vehicles from turning left. There have also been suggestions of traffic lights but the Parish Council will look at all the options with Highways to see which will be best.</p> <p>We have sadly lost several members of our community throughout the year and offer our condolences to the families.</p> <p>The Clerk talked through the Financial Report which is attached below in full.</p>
5	Policing Report A report was requested from the local police, but it did not get sent to the Clerk in time for the meeting. The Clerk will circulate the report when received on Facebook and the website.
6	Update on Cutcombe First School - Alison Blackmore, Headteacher. Alison Blackmore read through a report from the school. The full report can be found attached below in full. A round of applause was given to Alison for her report. Cllr Levenson said it always amazes us the number of activities you have for the children, and the children are very lucky to have you

and your great team. The staff are fantastic and always go above and beyond.

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Reports from other groups in the Parish

Jill Thompson report on the Moorland Hall – This year we finally got round to repairing bits and painting that needed doing. We have had to repair the roof where there was a leak. The roof has been stripped and will have a special fungicide coating on which should last many years. We have got rid of some woodworm in the corridor. The pavilion has been pulled down which went well, which had to be done before the end of February. We are putting down a huge base to the plan that was approved several years ago. We still have the money that was connected to the Pavilion, and we are looking into further grants to take it forward. We will then build modularly according to what money we can get. Going forward having two buildings will involve a lot more volunteers. So, we are getting there little by little, but slowly and carefully too and the finances are tight. Thank you to the Cutcombe Cricket Club for keeping the grass cut. I have asked several businesses to donate the cost of new marine ply around the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with their advert on. So, if anybody wants to buy a board, please contact Jill. The MUGA also needs re-surfacing which we are looking into possibly getting a grant for.

David Weir report on the Church – Thank you for inviting me to join this meeting of electors to give you an update on the church. I would like to start by saying how much I value being part of this community of Cutcombe, offering through the church an addition to Eric's offer of sustenance to the physical person, an offer of sustenance to the spiritual person. Though I have to say there is overlap and I often feel spiritually uplifted after a coffee with Eric in the pub.

Cutcombe Church offers regular services, communion, and other prayer services throughout the year. Our regular monthly service is 9:30 on the third Sunday of the month. In addition to this, we have special services for Christmas, some of which Alison referred to, with the family Christingle, which is the single biggest attended service across all of my parishes, Christmas Eve at 5.30 at Cutcombe.

On behalf of the church, I visit Cutcombe School each week in term time and for other events and activities in the church and it's a great uplift to do so. It's a great school and Alison does a tremendous job and her ability to run a few schools means that our local provision for children is protected in challenging times.

I go to Cutcombe Market on market days wherever possible and also eat there. There's a lot of sustenance.

I try and support Catherine Williams' work at Hill Farm Network, particularly in relation to the spring, the Singing in the Ring event.

Cutcombe Church is available throughout the year for baptisms, weddings and funerals and will, I think, host a Remembrance Sunday service this November.

The church maintains the churchyard which is available to all residents of Cutcombe who wish to be buried or to have their ashes interred there. This offer is open to all residents of Cutcombe Parish of all faiths and none, an offer we intend to maintain for as long as we have the space and resources to do so. The PCC appreciates all support they receive to help that work.

The PCC and its supporters organise regular fundraising events including in the last year Bingo, Whist Drives, Big Breakfasts and most recently an open garden at Cutthorn hosted by Chris Frowrich which was very well supported.

The local church is responsible for all its running expenses including paying a contribution towards the cost of maintaining a rector in the Exmoor benefice. And very sadly, recently, the beautiful and historic church of Treborough has closed, so I don't want to say it in too short a way, but basically a village church survives if the people who attend it and the people of the village want it to survive and support it, not necessarily by coming to services, but by supporting it in other ways. So, it's been quite a difficult thing to see Treborough close, and I would like to say to people, please, if you would like the church in Cutcombe to continue,

	<p>please try and find ways of supporting it. People of all faiths and none, whether or not you attend for services.</p> <p>Cllr Stephen Pugsley & Cllr Frances Nicholson, Somerset Council - It's always a busy local government year in one way or another, but I think the thing that Francis and I are particularly conscious of is that Cutcombe is a very active community with a very efficient Parish Council. We have 23 parishes in our division and Cutcombe stands out, I think, as having some of the best chairs and shortest meetings, which is always very important. Quite seriously, I think Francis and I would greatly say that the thing about Cutcombe is that it is a very active community with a very good and active Parish Council representing its interests. And I think seeing so many of them, we're very conscious of those extremely good councils that we come across and certainly I rate Cutcombe amongst them. So, I think we would like to thank you very much for what you do on behalf of this particular community in the wider context of Exmoor communities.</p>
8	<p>Open Forum</p> <p>A member of public brought up that when there is a road closure in the village vehicles try cutting down Ashwell Lane and getting stuck, and asked if a closed sign could be put up to stop people coming down to Cutcombe whenever they shut the road. Cllr Nicholson said she will raise this with Streetworks and will bring it up at the next Highways meeting.</p> <p>A member of public said the recycling lorry is not shutting its doors when they are collecting the recycling which means when it gets windy, it all gets blown back out the lorry. Cllr Nicholson asked the member of public to get the lorries registration plate number the next time it happens so that it can be reported through Somerset Waste. Other members of the public praised the recycling team for taking their bins when they forgot to put them out by the road.</p> <p>Cllr Hazel Crockford has inherited rather a large number of books and feels they are going to waste. There has been a suggestion of a community library, but we were open to ideas as to how it could actually work. Hazel will organise a meeting with interested people who had ideas for the library and then go from there. Hazel will keep the Parish Council updated with how things go.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.</p>

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix

- i) Financial Report
- ii) Cutcombe School Report

Cutcombe Parish Council 2025/26 Financial Report

At the end of Q4 2025/26 Cutcombe Parish Council had £44,340.62 in the accounts, this was split as follows:

Parish Council Current Account: £2,017.65
Parish Council Reserve Account: £23,535.25
Snowdrop Valley Current Account: £4,635.85
Snowdrop Valley Reserve Account: £14,151.87
TOTAL: £44,340.62

The council has some of the reserves currently earmarked as follows:

Backup operating costs of the public toilets for three years - £15,000
Snowdrop Valley Reserve against weather risks - £8,000
2026/27 Budget Use of Reserves - £900

This then brings the general reserves down to £20,440.62 overall, which is equivalent to roughly one year's costs of running the council.

Overall, the total income received was £20,627.61 and the total amount spent was £29,898.09. This over-spend was due to the lean-to project on the public toilets which was due to be finished in the previous financial year, but it over ran.

The total income received through Snowdrop Valley was £3,694.84. The total amount spent through Snowdrop Valley was £3,769.47, which included the payment for two years road closure.

The total donations made from March 2025 to now are as follows:

£900 to the Cricket Club towards grass cutting of the recreation ground.
£1,000 to FOCES for Astro turf around the new swimming pool.
£200 Donation for storage of the Snowdrop Valley Trailer.

Please see the full budget report can be found on the website.

[Cutcombe PC & SV Year End Reports 2025-26.xlsx](#)

[SV-Profit-Loss-Report-2025-26.pdf](#)

School Report to Parish council May 2026

Thank you for inviting me to provide an update on the schools.

In September, we began the academic year with 32 children on roll at Cutcombe, 11 children on roll at Exford, and 14 children attending the pre-school. This resulted in 24 pupils based at the Cutcombe site in Reception to Year 2, and 19 pupils on site at Exford in Years 3 and 4. Due to in-year movement, we anticipate finishing the academic year with 29 children on roll at Cutcombe and 13 children on roll at Exford.

It has been another busy and productive academic year. Outdoor learning continues to be a valued and integral part of our curriculum offer, of which we are very proud. The pre-school children have had regular access to the school garden and have attended Farm School sessions on several occasions throughout the year. Robin Class take part in a weekly Forest School session within the school garden. During the winter months, when weather conditions were particularly wet, staff found creative solutions to ensure outdoor learning continued, including village walks to observe the snowdrops and participation in litter-picking activities. Kingfisher Class have continued to take part in the Generation Exmoor Project in partnership with

staff from Exmoor National Park. Through this project, pupils have developed a deeper understanding of the local area and enriched their curriculum learning by working outdoors. For example, during geography lessons focusing on rivers, the children walked the course of a local river and carried out river studies, including measuring the width and speed of the water.

In addition to their Farm School visits, pre-school children also enjoyed a visit to a garden centre in Minehead, where they selected and purchased plants to bring back to school and plant in the school garden.

To celebrate Harvest, Kingfisher Class visited Coombe Farm to take part in a Harvest Experience led by Lynne from the Exmoor Youth Project. This visit supported the children in preparing for the whole-school Harvest Service, which this year was held at Exford Church. It was wonderful to see friends and families from both schools and parishes coming together to support and celebrate with the children.

In September, we also welcomed Friends of the School, who worked alongside Lynne to lead a whole-school Bible Day. Through a range of drama and art activities, the children learned about the different parts of the Bible in an engaging and interactive way.

The build-up to Christmas is always a special time in school. Children in Reception enjoyed a visit to collect the school Christmas tree before returning to school to decorate it themselves. Once again, we are very grateful to Exmoor Livestock Market for allowing Robin Class to perform their version of a Christmas carol.

Kingfisher Class's nativity, Prickly Hay, was a great success at Exford Memorial Hall, and our pre-school children sang beautifully for their parents around the Christmas tree in the pre-school setting. The children also looked fantastic in their Christmas jumpers, worn in support of Save the Children.

We travelled to Porlock Village Hall to watch the pantomime Peter Pan, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was an honour to be invited to take part in Singing in the Ring once again. A group of children sang the first verse of Once in Royal David's City before performing songs from their nativity performances.

Lynne organised a Christmas Experience for all the children at Coombe Farm. This enabled them to explore the Christmas story through a drama. Following a delicious Christmas lunch in the Rest and Be Thankful, the children made Christingle oranges in preparation for the Christingle service. This was held on the final day of the autumn term at Cutcombe Church, with the welcome support of families and friends from the school community.

To celebrate Easter, Robin Class welcomed Lynne from the Exmoor Youth Project, who led an engaging Easter Experience for the children. The pre-school children enjoyed an Easter egg hunt in the garden, and the whole school community came together for our Easter Service at Cutcombe Church, which was once again well attended. Later in the Year Lynne supported our school by delivering a rogation and Pentecost experience for Kingfisher class with the help of Rev Weir and Serena at Coombe Farm. We are extremely grateful for the support we receive from our Church Guardians.

Just before the Easter holidays, our Year 4 pupils joined children from Timberscombe and St Dubricus schools for their annual residential visit to Pinkery. This was another fantastic experience, during which the children made new friendships and challenged themselves by stepping outside their comfort zones. Activities included rock climbing and abseiling, walking through the Pinkery tunnel, and spending time away from home. We are extremely proud of all the children; they were a pleasure to take away and represented the school beautifully.

Robin and Kingfisher Classes visited East Quay in Watchet to take part in an art workshop and explore the gallery spaces. Exmoor Game School also visited both the Cutcombe and Exford sites to lead a Fur and Feather session. During this, the children learned how to prepare meat and thoroughly enjoyed eating the pheasant gougons they made.

Year 1 and 2 pupils visited the Dolls Museum in Dunster as part of their history learning about toys from the past. Kingfisher Class attended the Dulverton Literacy Festival, where they listened to author and illustrator Lauren Child talk about the writing and illustrating process.

Kingfishers also enjoyed visits from Wren Music, who taught the children local folk songs and supported them in collaboratively writing new music. These songs were later performed alongside pupils from

Timberscombe and Dulverton Schools at Moorland Hall. We are very grateful to the Simonsbath Festival for funding this project.

In addition, Kingfisher Class had the opportunity to work with professional musicians from Jackdaws Music Education Trust. The children learned about brass instruments before taking part in a short concert, with pupils contributing body percussion.

To celebrate World Book Day, local author Jill Newton visited the school and worked with all children from pre-school to Year 4. The children greatly enjoyed asking questions and produced some beautiful illustrations inspired by Jill's books. Linked to Reception children's English learning through Drawing Club, the children wrote invitations for their parents to attend a morning tea party inspired by *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*.

In January, we welcomed members from Ada in Porlock to launch our school Science Fair. The top three entries from each year group went on to represent the school at the Moorland Federation Science Fair. A special congratulations to Olly, who achieved second place overall in the Key Stage 2 category, and to Bertie (first place) and Albert (third place) in the Reception and Key Stage 1 category. During the spring term, Kingfisher Class took part in the Mini Police programme. Through this experience, the children learned about the different roles within the police force and visited Police Headquarters in Portishead. We would like to extend our thanks to PCSOs Linda and Michelle for leading this valuable programme for our children.

Being part of the wider community and supporting local initiatives is very important to us. We were pleased to welcome Emma Rowe from Wild Wellies to launch her updated Commui-Tree competition. Well done to Ben, who was awarded first prize, and to Mostin, who received a highly commended award.

We would like to thank the local garage for organising their Christmas Hamper raffle in aid of both the school and pre-school. Funds raised have already been used to support the author visit as part of World Book Day, and we will keep you informed as further funds are allocated.

We would also like to thank Lillian Harding and everyone who supported her Lent Lunch, which was held in aid of the school. The money raised has been used to fund taster sessions with the Football Fun Factory, which the children have thoroughly enjoyed.

Sport is an important part of our curriculum, and we aim to provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to take part in competitive and team sports. Once again, Reception children benefited from a six-week Balanceability programme, during which they developed their gross motor skills, balance, and coordination. In November, children from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 participated in a grassroots gymnastics competition at MFS, competing against schools from across West Somerset. In February, we joined with Timberscombe School to enter a more competitive event in Wellington, where the children competed against schools from across Somerset.

We were also pleased to welcome Somerset Shine, who delivered an engaging cricket programme, helping children to learn more about the sport. Eight pupils travelled to Danesfield School to take part in a cross-country event alongside other local first schools. In addition, children from Years 2, 3, and 4 attended area sports at Knights Templar School, where they performed extremely well, particularly in the team relay events.

The school swimming pool is now fully operational, and the new heater installed last year has proved to be much more efficient. Plans are in place to install a canopy over the pool, which will extend the period of time it can be used. We would like to extend a huge thank you to FOCES for their continued fundraising efforts in support of this project.

Moor Outdoors have provided three after-school cycling sessions, supporting children both with learning to ride and developing bike skills. Football Fun Factory have delivered taster sessions during the first half of the summer term and will be offering an after-school club following half term.

Looking ahead, pupils can look forward to further swimming sessions, a cricket tournament, Sports Day, and a triathlon event.

We would like to acknowledge Moorland Mums for completing their incredible challenge and raising funds for the Moorland Federation schools. We will update you once the funds have been received and allocated.

Strong partnerships with parents and carers are very important to us. During the autumn term, parents were invited to attend a reading workshop, where we explained our phonics scheme, Read Write Inc. (RWI), and shared practical ways they can support their children's reading at home.

Throughout the year, we also hold termly Open Classroom sessions, which give parents and carers the opportunity to spend time in class with their children, discussing their learning and sharing work they are particularly proud of. In addition, we run half-termly coffee mornings, providing parents with the chance to share their views and feedback in a relaxed and informal setting.

Fortnightly Celebration Worship are held, alternating between the two school sites. During these worships, children share their learning from the week, certificates are awarded to celebrate achievements, and pupils have the opportunity to share good news from home.

Encouraging children to become responsible citizens and advocates for change is very important to us. Throughout the year, the children have raised money for a number of charities, including St Margaret's Hospice and Comic Relief. The School Council organised a non-uniform day and bake sale for Red Nose Day, raising over £150.

In November, children at both school sites showed their respect for those who gave their lives for our freedom by joining their local communities at Remembrance services.

Both Robin and Kingfisher Classes have also taken part in litter-picking activities in the local area. Robin Class carried out a litter pick around the village, collecting three full sacks of litter weighing approximately 30kg. Items collected included 88 sweet and crisp wrappers, 19 aluminium cans, 16 plastic bags, 17 plastic bottles, 14 pieces of polystyrene, six single-use plastic gloves, a plastic desk tidy and light fitting, and seven items of clothing, including socks and gloves. Plastic was the most common material found, with packaging from 39 different brands identified. The most frequently found brands were Cadbury's (16 items), Coca-Cola (nine items), McDonald's (six items, including a foam package dating from 1990), and Tesco (five items). This work forms part of our ongoing commitment towards achieving Plastic Free School status, which Exford School has already been awarded.

In addition to the School Council's work raising funds for charity, reviewing school lunches, and contributing to discussions about school life, we also have My Happy Mind Ambassadors. These pupils help to promote wellbeing across the school, supporting their peers and encouraging the use of strategies taught through the My Happy Mind programme to ensure everyone feels happy and supported at school.

The school council were keen for us to hold the Pet Service again. This year it took place at Exford School with a wide range of pets in attendance, including a Bearded dragon, a wormery, chickens, cats, a hamster and several dogs. Children also enjoyed sharing photos of their pets if they were unable to bring them into school. We would like to thank parents for supporting with this event.

All of the above has been achieved while continuing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. We value the overall achievement of each individual child and take a holistic view of their development and encourage them to fulfil our school vision of prepare, believe, achieve; however, as a school, it is also important that we maintain high academic standards.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessments, staff take part in regular moderation activities with colleagues from across the Federation. In addition, governors carry out termly visits to monitor safeguarding procedures, attendance, curriculum delivery, and pupil data.

During the summer term, we will be reporting statutory assessment data to the local authority, including the Good Level of Development outcomes for Reception children, the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check results, and the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check.

Before we break up for the summer holidays, we still have a number of exciting activities to look forward to:

- Assemblies to launch the Library Summer Reading Challenge
- A visit for Robin Class to the RNLI station
- A whole-school Bible Day focusing on our Christian values
- A Year 3 educational visit to Bristol
- Year 4 "Move Up" celebrations at Taunton Minster
- Kingfisher Class taking part in a Singing Festival at the Regal Theatre

- Move-Up Day for all pupils
- A Kingfisher Class watersports trip
- A Robin Class beach trip
- A Robin Class Forest School celebration
- A Leavers' Service

Celebrating 150 Years of Cutcombe C of E First School We are delighted to be celebrating 150 years of Cutcombe Church of England First School and would warmly invite former pupils, families, staff, and members of the local community to join us on Tuesday 14th July.

The school gates will open at 2.30pm, followed by a special address from Bishop Fiona at 2.45pm. The afternoon will include performances by the children, such as country dancing and singing, as well as an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia showcasing the school's history. This will be a wonderful opportunity to reminisce, reconnect, and celebrate a much-loved village school. We very much hope you will be able to join us. Please do share this date with anyone who may be interested, and feel free to get in touch if you have photographs, memories, or would like to be involved in any way.

Looking ahead to next year, we are anticipating having 28 children on roll at Cutcombe and 12 on roll at Exford. This will be 15 children on site at Exford and 25 children on site at Cutcombe with pre-school. You may have heard that from September I will also be Head of School at Timberscombe School. Mrs Hall, the current Head of School at Timberscombe has made the decision to step back from leadership for now and to spend more time in the classroom. Coffee mornings at all three schools have taken place where parents were given the opportunity to discuss this arrangement specifically. All three schools already work closely together and this will continue to strength the links between the small church schools. We are extremely lucky to have such committed and passionate staff at all the schools who will continue to go above and beyond to ensure our children are given the best possible opportunities and experiences.

Thank you once again for providing me with this opportunity to update you on the schools.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.