

Present: Cllr Richard Footitt, Cllr Tom Scott-Malden, Cllr Robin Ketteridge, Cllr Sue Coutanche, Cllr Martyn Gillingham.

In Attendance: Mark Payne (Clerk), and 6 members of the public.

Item No.		Action
2025/001	To elect a chair for the year 2025/26 Cllr Richard Footitt agreed to stand as Chair. This was unanimously approved.	
2025/002	To elect a vice-chair for the year 2025/26 Cllr Robin Ketteridge agreed to stand as Vice Chair. This was unanimously approved.	
2025/003	Apologies for absence There were no apologies	
2025/004	Approval of Minutes from 2023 AGM Approval of the minutes of 19 th June 2024 was proposed by Cllr SC, seconded by Cllr TSM. The minutes were approved.	
2025/005	Chairman's Report for the year 2023/24 Attached below and available on www.southperrottparishcouncil.org	
2025/006	Financial Report for the Year 2023/2024 The annual accounts for the year 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 were reported as follows: Total Income for the year £6,607 Total Expenditure for the year £5,655 Balance in hand as at 31 March 2024 £7,178	

Chairman's Report to South Perrott Parish Council's AGM

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

What a year this has been! When I took on the role of chairman last May, I didn't really know what I had let myself in for, but even so the role has been most rewarding.

The Parish Council really do work as a team, each with our own responsibilities, but supporting each other to help make South Perrott a great place to live. My report reflects the hard work my fellow councillors have put in; I value their advice and wisdom highly and it is certainly true that we have achieved a great deal for the village together.

So, what has happened in the last year.

In May and June, we started on our campaign to improve areas in the village that had become overgrown or neglected. We started with Langmoor Lane and with Sue Coutanche on the case, Dorset Council couldn't say no. So, with some help from Stephen Legg in moving a fallen tree, the lane was cleared for walkers. There is still an issue with the bank of the stream which we need to resolve, even though Dorset Council have no money to repair it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Footpath Officer, Sue, who continues to

ensure we can all enjoy the paths and bridleways (and roadways for that matter) around the village.

Over the year, we continued with improvements, organising the repair of the wall in Manor Close, organising the cutting down of the tree at the bottom of Church Hill, keeping the pressure on Dorset Council to repair potholes on the main road and in Lecher Lane, cutting trees back along the main road and in Pipplepen Lane, organising the maintenance of the verges in Manor Close and along Pipplepen Lane from the Village Hall to the Old School House, agreeing to purchase planters for the end of School Hill, taking over the maintenance costs of the defibrillator and organising a free first aid course for residents.

Thanks to our County Councillor, Craig Monks, and the work of Sue there is now a bus service on a Saturday to the village, which will hopefully be expanded over the next year to improve rural connectivity. It has been extremely helpful to have Craig attend our meetings and I am very grateful for his knowledge and insight. He was instrumental in procuring some trees for the village which have now been planted alongside one of the agricultural tracks.

Martyn Gillingham has continued to keep us posted on his numerous conversations with the Environment Agency about the work on the flood defences. After many months the route across the dam has now re-opened and given better access to the Parrett Trail. Martyn has also been immersed in conversations with solicitors about the Parish Council becoming the sole trustee of the Millennium Green. This is an ongoing saga and we await confirmation from the Charity Commission. Despite the delay, Martyn has organised a working group of residents to manage the Millennium Green and has organised the grass to be cut. Martyn has also taken on the challenge of informing residents about Digital Voice as well as producing a Welcome Pack to be given to new residents. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Martyn for all this in addition to his ongoing River Warden duties. He has single-handedly kept our village flood free and can often be seen around the village clearing leaves and mud from gulleys and drains.

Thanks also to Robin Ketteridge who has been instrumental in making some of the things I have already mentioned happen. Additionally, he has spent many hours talking to Wessex Internet and keeping us posted about developments in the village, negotiating with Dorset Council about the provision of an EV charger for the village and investigating how we can get a 5G signal – yes, I know it would be good if we could even get a 3G signal. He has also provided the after-meeting food which, I'm sure we will continue to provide from time-to-time.

My thanks also goes to Tom Scott-Malden, who, in November, painted our village red with poppies and a Tommy silhouette and followed it up at Christmas by organising and decorating a Christmas Tree in The Pound. Additionally, he has kept our website and email system up and running, plus organising all the finance until Mark managed to get Lloyds to give him access to our account.

Towards the end of 2024, we decided to co-opt more residents into our team to help expand the work of the Council. To this end, Jonathan Baker volunteered as our Digital Champion, Yvonne Sullivan agreed to chair a steering group looking to make South

Perrott a plastic free community, Andy Sydell volunteered to be our Tree Warden and Louise Sydell volunteered as Deputy River Warden to share in the fun that Martyn has with mud and leaves.

There have been relatively few planning applications this year, most of which the Parish Council has been able to support. The Parrett Hotel has now complied with its Enforcement Notice and after discussion with James & Yvonne, they have agreed to open to non-residents on a limited basis to test demand. The only application we have not supported is for the removal of the telephone box in The Pound. Dorset Council upheld our view and denied permission. I am very grateful to Michael Stevenette for organising the painting of the telephone box (and the post box alongside), in addition to all the work he does in maintaining the flowers and the appearance of The Pound.

Possibly one of our biggest challenges was when our Clerk, Katie Armstrong, resigned at the beginning of October. In order to find a suitable replacement, we deliberately took our time and I'm delighted that Mark Payne accepted the post in January. In the interim, I was acting clerk, which was quite an experience, but it gave me some very useful contacts at Dorset Council as well as having a much better understanding of the work of the clerk. Since Mark took over, we have operated very smoothly and I can't thank him enough for bringing his experience and calmness to the role.

Finally, I'd like to thank the members of this parish who come to these meetings and offer good advice and guidance. I hope that as a Council we have been able to make sure that people had an opportunity to speak up about things that were important to them.

Richard Footitt

Chairman, South Perrott Parish Council