



Annual Assembly Minutes 2026

Date of Meeting:	Thurs 14 th May 2026	Time:	19:00
Location of Meeting:	Hembry Room, Westfield Church Hall		
Present:	Cllr. John Vassalli, Cllr. R. Leighton, Cllr. G. Mansfield, Cllr. J. Johnstone, Cllr. F. Smith		
In Attendance:	Tammy Roper (Clerk), Cllr. G. Slocombe (via Zoom)		
Apologies:	Cllr. B. Bolt		

Ref:	Topic of Discussion
AA-1-14/5/26	Chairman's Report
	<p>This is my second year as chair of Durleigh Parish Council and major planning matters are afoot which will greatly affect our parish. There is much for us to do. I must thank the Parish Clerk Tammy Roper for her help and advice and all the hard work she has put in for the day-to-day running of the Parish Council. I am lucky to have Cllr John Vassalli's advice at hand. His knowledge and experience have been invaluable. I also thank councillors Janet Johnson, Gary Mansfield and Francesca Smith for their continued presence and support on the Parish Council.</p> <p>We have been unable to fill the vacancy on our council for the last year despite advertising on the notice board, Facebook, Durleigh Now and our website. We meet every two months and the work is interesting and not arduous.</p> <p>The Parish Council is now paying for the grass-cutting around the estate west of Queenswood Lane. We are very pleased with the way it has been done. Also, we arranged for the dead elms in Queenswood Lane to be cleared and Cllr Gary Mansfield and I have swept away the stones and bark on the path. This footpath has been known as Queenswood Lane for years, and we didn't want the old name to be forgotten, so I have fixed a name plate to the footpath sign.</p> <p>Cllr John Vassalli has continued to represent us on Dowsborough Local Community Network and their Highways sub-committee.</p> <p>Wessex Water have planted a new woodland in their wetland area west of the reservoir which can be accessed from the lay-by on Enmore Road. They have allowed us to install a bench there near the concrete bridge. It is a peaceful spot to sit and appreciate the natural surroundings.</p> <p>The councillors look at all planning applications and often don't comment on smaller household improvements. Now there are three major projects that we are examining to see how they impact on Durleigh. Application 23/19/00002 -Land to the South of Quantock Road – where Persimmon intend to build 111 dwellings is on the edge of Durleigh. We have persisted in objecting on the grounds that Persimmon have made no provision for upgrading the stretch of the public footpath that connects the development to Holford Road. I spoke at the planning committee meeting and emphasized the importance of good footpaths and cycle ways to reduce the road traffic around the estate. The planning committee agreed but could not guarantee that the upgrade would be prioritised.</p> <p>Meanwhile, more houses were being planned near Hamp by Bloor Homes. At the September Parish Council meeting, they were invited to present their plans for 220 homes on Rhode Lane in the fields in the east of Durleigh Parish. The meeting was attended by Hamp and Willstock residents, some of whom spoke and objected to the proposal.</p> <p>In February, when Bloor Homes applied for planning permission (23/25/00017), we held a special meeting. After a lively discussion, we decided to submit an objection on access</p>



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	<p>grounds, which you can read on Somerset Council’s website. North Petherton and Bridgwater councils also objected.</p> <p>Recently, a screening option application has been submitted concerning the rebuilding of Haygrove school on land between Spaxton Road and Skimmerton Lane – 23/26/00001. It is an environmental impact statement and the planning application will follow. We will then hold a special meeting to allow parishioners to have their say and then we will decide on a reply.</p> <p>We feel that we will have a busy year ahead.</p>
AA-2-14/5/26	Attendance of Members
	As above.
AA-3-14/5/26	Parishioners’ Questions, Issues and Concerns
	<p>Eight members of the public present, from Cothelstone Close. They were interested in the access route to the proposed new school. They were concerned that the previous application had significant highway changes that affected the bank between the back of their houses and Spaxton Road.</p> <p>They asked when it is likely that the actual planning application for the new school will be submitted, and hence the route/highway changes known, and if there would be a public consultation.</p> <p>The parish council confirmed that it does not know and does not have any further information, to that available on the ‘EIA Screening Opinion’ application, published on the Somerset Council Planning Portal, ref no: 23/26/00001. We do not know if there will be a ‘public consultation’ hosted by Somerset Council, but the Chair commented that we will hold a bigger public meeting when the application is submitted, to gather residents’ comments before submitting a response.</p> <p>Councillor Slocombe commented that discussions are happening with Somerset Highways and she expects that the public/residents will be informed very soon.</p> <p>The residents present also questioned whether the councillors will be able to take part in discussions about the new school, due to the proximity/location to where they live.</p> <p>The Clerk explained the process for ‘Application for Dispensation’ which allows councillors to apply to the Proper Officer for a dispensation if;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of persons prohibited from participating in the business is so great a proportion of the council as to impede the transaction of the business. • Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area. <p>If the dispensations are granted, then the councillors will be able to discuss/vote on the subject.</p>

Meeting Closed at:	7:25pm
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Minutes Signed by: **Date:**
 (Chairman)