

Annual report on the Proceedings of Cary Moor Parish Council for the year to May 2026
(submitted to the Cary Moor Parishes Annual Assembly Meeting on 19th May 2026)

The past year has been, once again, one of 'business as usual', with the great majority of our time spent on the assessment of local planning applications and other interactions with Somerset Council on behalf of our parishioners, and of providing support to local community groups.

The members of the Council have remained unchanged. The vacancy for North Barrow remains, despite continued efforts to stoke interest in that community to put forward a candidate. Whilst this does not impact on the ongoing work of the Council as a whole, it does mean that on occasion the North Barrow Ward is left unrepresented in discussions. This is not ideal, and efforts will continue to try and fill the vacancy.

The Council has met a total of 11 times during the year to May 2026 and has considered 10 planning applications, slightly fewer than the previous year. This aspect of our community role continues to be led by our long-serving vice-chairman Councillor Martin Roberts. His tireless and well considered approach continues to allow the Council to make well-reasoned recommendations to the Somerset Planning Authority. This is an area that I feel the Council can continue to be of use to our residents, notwithstanding the small influence that parish councils have in County planning matters, and we will continue to do all we can to represent the value of the local determination of planning matters in forthcoming consultations despite impositions by national government that threatens to dramatically reduce local (and therefore knowledgeable) involvement in planning decisions.

We continue to support local organisations, used by our parishioners, with small grants to assist with their work including SSCAT, Castle Cary Library, CAB and the South Barrow Recreational Trust. Contributions are also made to assist with churchyard maintenance across the Parish. The Council was pleased that we could continue this support and maintain our emergency reserves without any increase in our Precept, again. The Council continues to encourage progress on local issues that prove difficult to attract any traction with SC. Woodland Edge and its associated planning enforcement and improved safety of the B3153 through Alford and Lovington are two such example, as they were last year.

We are well supported by our Somerset Councillors, Henry Hobhouse and Kevin Messenger, who both keep us up to date with SC deliberations and are available to offer assistance on local Parish matters. I would like to once again offer our thanks to Henry and Kevin for their help. None of our work, whether successful in the short-term or requiring more long-term engagement, is possible without the significant time and effort given by our individual Councillors and I would once again like to thank them for their work over the year, none more so than our outstanding Clerk, Becky Carter.

Mark Main
Chairman – Cary Moor Parish Council