Chairman's Annual Report - West Harptree Parish Council - Municipal Year 2025–2026

I would like to begin by thanking my fellow Parish Councillors, our Clerk, Ward Councillor Simon McCombe, volunteers and all residents who have contributed their time, support and community spirit throughout the year. The Parish Council could not function without the dedication and goodwill of so many people within the village.

This year's main focus was undoubtedly the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Memorial Hall. The centenary celebrations were extremely well attended and reflected the importance of the Hall as the heart of village life for generations of residents. The Memorial Hall has continued to host a wide variety of successful community events, fundraising activities and social gatherings throughout the year, helping to strengthen the strong sense of community within our village. Thanks are due to the Memorial Hall Committee and all volunteers involved for their continued hard work and commitment.

The year began with the completion of the refurbishment of the play equipment in the recreation ground. I am certain that former Cllr Sheila Weatherill, who many years ago helped raise the funds for its original creation, would have been delighted to see that it remains a treasured and well-used community space that has now been restored for future generations to enjoy.

The Parish Council trees at the Recreation Ground are also doing well. The tree planted to commemorate the King's Coronation has thankfully sprung into life after some initial concern, and the Red May tree planted in 1973 in memory of former councillor Robert Jones is still surviving and continues to add colour. In addition, the bridge and steps on the path to Great Ground have also been repaired and improved.

The Triangle, which remains a focal point of our village, has received thousands of compliments throughout the year, particularly for the Begonias during the summer and the Tulips in the spring. The Triangle flower bed was originally the vision of former Cllr Peter Wood and we were deeply saddened by his passing this year after nearly 50 years of service as both Chairman and Councillor. His contribution to village life over many decades was immense and greatly appreciated. The Parish Council is planning a memorial bench in recognition of his longstanding service to the community.

Drainage and flooding issues have continued to receive considerable attention during the year. Drainage works have now been carried out on several sections of the A368 through the village, which we hope will help alleviate future flooding problems. The Parish Council has also successfully secured funding for further drainage improvements. I would particularly like to thank councillors and residents who have assisted with litter picking and the monitoring, reporting and clearing drains during periods of heavy rainfall.

Traffic and highway matters remain among the largest concerns raised by residents. Issues including speeding, dangerous parking, potholes, road deterioration and anti-social driving continue to be pursued with Bath & North East Somerset Council and partner agencies, in an effort to secure improvements and enforcement action where possible. The Parish Council has also continued to engage actively with planning matters affecting the parish, including responding to planning applications and wider consultations in order to help protect the rural character of the village. Members of the council have also been actively involved with the X99 and X91 Chew Valley bus services. The annual community litter pick accrued quite a hoard.

I would like to congratulate Cllr Simon McCombe, who stepped down from the Parish Council during the year but continues to support the village in his role as Ward Councillor and regularly attends our meetings. I would also like to express sincere thanks to Cllr John Mitchell, who is leaving the Parish Council after many years of service. His expertise and outstanding work on planning matters will be greatly missed.

Finally, I would once again like to thank everyone who contributes positively to village life and helps make West Harptree such a strong and supportive community. It has been a privilege to serve this year as Chairman of the Parish Council.