



Tatworth and Forton Parish Council Newsletter

December, 2025

Contents: Councillors, Amenities, Road Closures, Buses, Policing, Christmas Meal, Christmas Tree Lights Switch On, Tatworth Cemetery, Parish Finances

Hello, and welcome to our last newsletter of 2025 for the residents of Tatworth and Forton Parish.

Autumn is nearly over after a beautiful sunny and hot summer; that memory seems so long ago after the last two months of rain. Hopefully, the weather will not be too bad over the coming months.

Councillors

After the last Newsletter, in which we introduced three new Councillors, we are this time looking at our longest standing Councillor, Eric Peadon.

Hi, my name is Eric Peadon, and I have been a Councillor for this Parish Council for over 40 years. I was born in Tatworth, have spent most of my life in Crossways, and went through Tatworth School before Holyrood Secondary Modern School in 1963. I have always worked with my hands in the Tatworth area, being self-employed for the last 18 years. I have done a lot with my life in the community, Carnival floats for 58 years, gardening and working three allotments, being involved with the Horticultural Society and

being a Councillor. I became a Councillor in the 1980s to give back to the local community. I have been involved with several committees: Planning, Amenities, and I'm Chairman of the Cemetery Committee.

I take pride in this village and intend to carry on as long as I have the support of the local residents. I have seen a lot of changes, not all good, but that is life.

Amenities

The most recent meeting of the Amenities Committee was held on 13th November, 2025, at 7pm, at Forton Community Hall, where a full and comprehensive range of subjects was covered.

Jubilee Field

We look forward to hedge laying, replacement trees and groundwork at this important and popular amenity. Land drainage management has not been as successful as we had hoped, and more work in that area is scheduled. The new plan is to introduce some new land drains, covered by compacted road scalplings. The top gate to the dog exercise and training field is also to receive similar treatment.

An unsupervised dog has found its way back into the park area. Please report where the dog is entering the field by marking the gap in the perimeter fence somehow, and then reporting that to the Parish Clerk. Dog walkers are requested to continue to respect all visitors to the area and take full advantage of the facilities provided, including the dog waste bin at the exit to the Jubilee Field at School Lane.

The top field - specially secured, prepared and maintained, and where walkers are encouraged to exercise dogs off-lead - now has a memorial bench installed.

Work on fruit tree protection and pruning is due again, and anyone who would like to help is asked to give their details to the Parish Clerk (clerk@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk).

The Parish Council have agreed to make an award to the best kept allotment, and we hope that can be in association with the Horticultural Association. A few allotments have become available, so be sure to contact the Parish Clerk to reserve one. Allotment holders have formed an "Association", and are represented on the Parish Council. The Allotment Association is considering having a "community plot", where anyone can apply to work.



Look out for an invitation to the Tatworth Orchard Wassail, which we hope to arrange for Saturday, 17 January, 2026!

Shelters, bins, notice boards and benches

It has been reported that our bus shelters have been targeted by unacceptable behaviour, so that special, expensive cleaning has had to be arranged. Please report all antisocial behaviour. All our bus shelters are kept clean and maintained by the parish, and additional bins have been installed. Since Somerset Council are reluctant to empty them, responsibility for this task falls onto the parish.

Notice boards are installed and maintained around our community; please contact the Parish Clerk with a notice if you wish to use them.

Benches can be installed in memory of members of the parish; details can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

Coombses Pond

Planning work that has been promised for years at this invaluable parish amenity continues. The first part of the plan, to prepare the entrance and the near pond bank for limited ability access, is complete. Please take care when you go and visit to check progress.

All owners of land bordering watercourses have critical responsibilities.

Management of the perimeter path continues with removal of dead, fallen and hazardous trees.

A successful bid for a grant from "Rivers Run Through Us", funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, will help us by preparing a management plan for the pond, and this should guide us in dealing with duckweed contamination, which stops light from penetrating the water and kills all other life. The iris growth has also taken over a huge part, and must also be controlled.

Litter left around this natural area includes sweet and cake wrappers and drink cans. Please go and enjoy the pond, but take your litter home rather than spoiling it for others.

Please remember great care must still be taken by anyone in this wild area, with deep water, nettles and many trip hazards. The access and perimeter path will be kept clear of undesirable vegetation and log piles. Contractors will begin this work, but we need volunteers to maintain it.

Hedgerows and their trimming

There is an expectation that landowners with hedgerows adjoining roads keep them trimmed, generally on an annual basis. The work usually takes place in the autumn and winter, and in fact it's not allowed after the end of February, because of birds starting to nest.

By the current point in the trimming season, some of the hedgerows have had their annual pruning, while

others have not. Where they have not, a lot of vegetation tends to be sticking out over the road, including nettles and thorns. If you're walking or cycling and need to get over on a narrow lane to let a vehicle pass, you can easily get caught up in it.

Since the hedgerows are going to be trimmed at some point, could we just politely ask landowners to trim, where possible, sooner rather than later?

Road closures

Are you fed up with the constant road closures, both in Tatworth and in Chard? It just seems to be one after the other.

All of these closures need to be authorised by Somerset Council, and we've been assured that they do try to minimise inconvenience to the public, often rejecting certain proposed closures that we don't even hear about. Clearly, it's a question of balance: the travelling public may have to put up with some inconvenience in order that improvements may be made. But in recent months the balance seems to have been tilted markedly in favour of the contractors and their convenience, and away from the general public and our inconvenience. The key issues are:

- *Whether the closure is really necessary.* Could a contraflow (not ideal, but better than a complete closure) be required instead? Does the work, often on the side of the road, really necessitate a closure? Why is it that quite often, in practice, the road could be used, with care, even if the signs indicate otherwise?
- *Confusing signage.* How often do you see a sign saying 'Road ahead closed'? Sometimes this does mean that the road you are travelling is indeed closed ahead. But sometimes it's just a side road that you weren't planning to take, anyway. There's no way of knowing, so you carry on hoping for the best. And as for the 'Diverted traffic' signs... which diversion does this refer to, from where, to where?
- *No reasonable alternatives.* A classic case recently was the complete closure of the A358 on the north side of Chard, while at the same time a possible alternative route using Glynswood was also closed. Quite what anyone unfamiliar with the area would have done is anybody's guess – no suggestions were displayed. 'We've closed the road, and that's that: get on with it!'
- *Lack of reasonable notice.* The Parish Council should be notified of intended closures, and generally is... but sometimes too late for us to do anything about it.
- *Bus confusion.* Whenever there is a road closure in Tatworth (generally, once every few weeks), the no. 30 bus avoids the village and carries on along the A358. If you know about the closure and are heading into Chard, you might take the risk of crossing the A358 by the church and standing on the muddy verge – the bus should stop for you there, even though there is no sign to that effect. But very often, you probably don't know about the diversion: there are generally no signs at the bus stops to tell you what is happening and when.

Somerset Councillor Connor Payne is seeking a meeting with the relevant people at Somerset Council to discuss this ongoing problem, and the Parish Council will seek to join him. He also has an online petition regarding this problem, and it would be really good if you could add your voice: www.change.org/stopchardroadworks.

Buses

Following on from the problems regarding road closures, and indeed from the meeting held in July, the Parish Council are in frequent touch with First Bus regarding the no. 30 service. Apart from the issues caused by road closures, other matters which have been raised include:

- *Request to Somerset Council for concession cards to be accepted on the 08:50 weekday service from Tatworth into Chard and beyond.* This was considered by the Council in conjunction with First Bus, but unfortunately declined.
- *Dissatisfaction with the timetable revised earlier this year.* Particularly in view of the above, we are seeking representation when timetables are next reviewed, early next year.
- *The new buses.* Hopefully, most people appreciate the new, clean, modern electric buses which have recently appeared. However, there are concerns about certain services being overcrowded: it does sometimes seem that, while double-decker buses may be assigned to the quieter times, busier times get the single-deckers – some services are unpleasantly overcrowded. The Council has made representations to First Bus about this issue.

Policing

We would like to welcome PSCO Hayley Harris, who attended our full parish meeting at the start of November. She was able to offer us information and reassurance regarding crime reported in this area, and how the police do and will respond to it.

One area highlighted was that, without logged reports of crime, the police are unable to take much action. If you are aware of something you feel the police should investigate, then please go onto the [Avon and Somerset Police website](#), where you can submit a report. It does not take long. This builds up a vital bank of evidence, and enables the police to investigate. Without this information, the police do find it hard to act. It is a simple process, and greatly helps the local police in their role. Thank you!

Christmas Meal



The Christmas lunch was enjoyed by many residents, if not as many as we had hoped for



Christmas Tree Lights Switch On



This was well supported by the community – and with a visit from Father Christmas! Thank you to those who organised, especially Richard and Kaye Down.

Tatworth Cemetery

The improvement of our cemetery is ongoing, with plans for 2026 to replace the lavender hedge with Yew, and the car park privet hedge with an extension of the front railings. These are subject to finance being available. The work towards a planning application to extend the cemetery into the neighbouring field is reaching a crucial stage whilst we wait for approval from the Environment Agency.

Finance

At our recent Finance Committee meeting, our 2025-2026 spending against budget was analysed, and it was forecast that we may have a small surplus. At the same meeting, we started the process of setting the budget for 2026-2027. We are looking to maintain and improve the amenities in the Parish, both for Tatworth and Forton, but costs are always increasing. The initial analysis is that we can keep the increase to the element of the Council Tax that the Parish Council receives to a minimum, perhaps to an average of no more than 30p a month.

Dates of the next Parish Council meetings in 2026: 15 January, 5 February, 5 March.

As this is the last newsletter of 2025, the Parish Council would like to wish all residents within our Parish a very Merry Christmas and a successful New Year!