



# PARISH PLAN

## 2023-2027

Approved: 15 May 2023  
Next review date: May 2024

## Introduction

Following the last election in May 2022 and the creation of the new Unitary Authority, Somerset Council on 1 April 2023, Old Cleeve Parish Councillors agreed that they needed to set and agree the priorities and actions of our Council as the elected representatives of Old Cleeve residents.

Our Plan is a working document and aims to guide the Council in its work and activities up until the next planned election in 2027. The Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it still represents the wishes of the Council and the needs of the Parish.

## The Parish of Old Cleeve

Old Cleeve is a rural Parish with a population of around 1,700. It covers a large geographical area from the sea at Blue Anchor to the Brendon Hills on Exmoor. It includes the villages of Old Cleeve, Roadwater and Washford as well as smaller communities at Blue Anchor [part], Bilbrook, Chapel Cleeve, Golsoncott and Leighland Chapel. Around half of the Parish lies within Exmoor National Park. Much of Old Cleeve village was designated as a conservation area in 1990 and there are numerous listed buildings and sites of historic interest throughout the Parish.

## The Parish Council

The Parish Council is the first tier of local government and is closest to, and can best represent, the communities throughout the whole Parish. The Council consists of three wards – Old Cleeve, Roadwater and Washford. Each ward has its own elected Parish Councillors – 4 for Old Cleeve, 5 for Roadwater and 6 for Washford, giving a total of 15 Councillors for the whole Parish. All Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers and receive no allowance for their duties.

The work and administration of the Parish Council is managed by the Parish Clerk who is also the Responsible Financial Officer. This is a part-time [0.25 full time equivalent] paid role.

The Parish Council currently has very few duties and limited powers. Most of the issues of concern frequently expressed by Parish Councillors and residents e.g. highways, planning, housing etc are the responsibility of Somerset Council.

## Objective

The overriding objective of the Parish Council is to **enhance and protect the sense of place** – in other words what Old Cleeve Parish looks and feels like to live in, work in or visit. The Parish Council will take the lead to achieve this and will actively work with all partners to engender community spirit, maintain safety and help to develop a sense of community pride throughout the whole Parish.

## Our priorities

### **ONE: Administration, Accountability and Parish Benefit**

The Parish Council will abide by all legal obligations and financial protocols and will operate within an approved annual budget. We will ensure good governance and accountability at all times.

#### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ All Parish Council meetings to be advertised and open to the public
- ❖ Annual Parish Meeting to be held
- ❖ All decisions taken to provide value for money
- ❖ Website to be maintained and regularly updated e.g. with minutes
- ❖ Provide training to Clerk / RFO and Councillors as required
- ❖ Review policies annually or as required
- ❖ Provide donations to good causes within the Parish
- ❖ Support community events e.g. warm spaces
- ❖ Participate in Local Community Networks

### **TWO: Assets and Services**

The Parish Council will ensure that all assets are regularly inspected and well maintained. All assets will be included in our Asset Register. New assets or services will only be considered if they help to meet or support our priorities.

#### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ Undertake regular inspections and maintenance of assets as required
- ❖ Ensure suitable insurance provision to manage risks
- ❖ Plan for the short, medium and long term replacement of assets
- ❖ Check & maintain defibrillators and provide public training for safe use
- ❖ Review & renew contracts as required
- ❖ Identify Assets of Community Value (ACV)
- ❖ Consider additional assets and/or services if offered

### **THREE: Environmental issues**

The Parish Council will consider the environmental impact on all the decisions and actions it takes. Additionally, we will work to deliver projects that improve or enhance the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

#### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ Use of electronic media for meetings other than public meetings
- ❖ Car sharing for meetings where alternative means are not available
- ❖ Reducing printed material
- ❖ Maintaining Parish Council owned land to provide for nature
- ❖ Reduce use of lighting and/or consider low carbon alternatives
- ❖ Improve the natural environment, e.g. tree planting
- ❖ Identify opportunities to take over / enhance redundant land
- ❖ Support projects that enhance or preserve the natural environment

#### **FOUR: Highways and Rights of Way**

The Parish Council will continue to press for better maintenance of existing infrastructure and for new projects that improve traffic conditions and safety for all road users, particularly vulnerable road users.

##### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ Refer all issues to highway authority as required
- ❖ Report defects & chase up action
- ❖ Support action to ensure Rights of Way remain open & accessible
- ❖ Support measures that prioritise walking, cycling and horse riding
- ❖ Support and help facilitate the Steam Coast Trail
- ❖ Consider assisting with maintenance e.g. historic fingerposts
- ❖ Develop proposals for Quiet Lanes
- ❖ Support Community Speedwatch
- ❖ Consider funding for low cost improvements

#### **FIVE: Planning, Built Environment and Community Safety**

The Parish Council will consider and respond to all planning applications to ensure that all development is appropriate. We will encourage and support maintenance of property and the built environment. We will work with the Police to 'design out' areas or issues that may lead to criminality, including anti-social behaviour.

##### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ Review & provide comments on all planning applications
- ❖ Maintain our assets e.g. bus shelters, notice boards to a good standard
- ❖ Review our section 106 priorities
- ❖ Review / take over / maintain open or neglected spaces
- ❖ Review / recommend appropriate road names within the Parish
- ❖ Undertake litter picks and/or parish 'spring cleans'
- ❖ Consider ways to reduce littering including dog fouling

#### **SIX: Housing and Tourism**

The Parish Council supports the need for affordable housing for local people if our communities, and facilities within them, are to survive and thrive. We will support local development especially where this provides local affordable housing or where facilities are to be provided for local residents and visitors. We will support the numerous voluntary and community enterprises within our Parish.

##### **Actions: What we are doing and will continue to do to deliver this priority:**

- ❖ Press for planning controls to prevent second homes / holiday lets
- ❖ Support Blue Anchor Community Toilets
- ❖ Support local shops and businesses e.g. Roadwater shop
- ❖ Support / utilise Village Halls
- ❖ Support Old Cleeve School e.g. allowing free use of Recreation Ground