

Linda Buckley: 14/07/2026

Parish Council Chairman and all Councillors

Please ensure this statement is fully entered into the Minutes of the 14 July 2026 meeting. What I am about to say concerns the future sustainability of Coombe Bissett.

In direct terms: Coombe Bissett is in a state of emergency. We have just endured another devastating flood; and a messy Referendum that has left the parish community divided. And now Wiltshire's entire planning system has collapsed. The Local Plan has been withdrawn. A new one must be forced through in just 30 months. It must deliver an 80% increase in housing numbers across the county. And the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan will be compelled to align with it, making Coombe Bissett a target village in the scoping exercises now underway. Wiltshire Council has already issued a Call for Sites.

While planning policy is in chaos, Homington is protected by being re-cast as "open countryside" in the Neighbourhood Plan — but Coombe Bissett is now exposed to inappropriate development, like never before. This village has already exceeded a safe level of development.

Two significant planning applications — the Old Vicarage and Churchill Place — remain unresolved. The Local Planning Authority has repeatedly failed to uphold the National Planning Policy Framework protections that should safeguard this village. The Parish Council is now legally compliant with an indicative target of 18 new dwellings, and that number is almost certain to rise. Government funding for Neighbourhood Plans has been cut. Wiltshire Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Speculative developers know exactly what that means.

And the situation is even more alarming. At Cabinet on 25 June, Wiltshire Council's Leader confirmed that if more than 10% of rejected applications are overturned by the Planning Inspectorate, Wiltshire could be placed into Special Measures — meaning central government would take over local planning decisions. Overturns were already approaching 7%. Wiltshire Council is dangerously compromised and on the edge of losing local control entirely.

The recent flood, again, showed the reality: Coombe Bissett has exceeded a safe level of development. This is a Conservation Area, within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the Avon SAC — yet the built footprint has become dangerously concentrated. River-bank trees are disappearing. Erosion is worsening. New springs are emerging. Residents are living with repeated trauma, spiralling costs, and the constant anxiety of being overwhelmed. One more severe flood could push this village into sudden decline.

The Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base is clear: the combination of flood drivers and the absence of a Mains Sewerage System - model's a serious public-health risk. Strategic

planners must be presented with the facts without delay: Coombe Bissett cannot safely accommodate more housing. The recent problems associated with water- flow proved this for a single dwelling — the consequences of more could be devastating.

I am asking the Parish Council, publicly and formally, to pursue an immediate moratorium on all planning applications that increase the built-out area of Coombe Bissett. The evidence is overwhelming. The risks are escalating. The consequences of inaction are unthinkable.

The village's fundamental sustainability is at stake. Coombe Bissett needs this dynamic protective strategy now, without delay or compromise.

Linda Buckley