

PUNCKNOWLE & SWYRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

Councillors G. Fry (Chairman), J Marsh (Vice Chairman), M Buckland, P Bullen, B Pye.

IN ATTENDANCE: S. Rose (Parish Clerk), 1 member of the public, Councillor M Roberts.

1 PUBLIC TIME

The Council is asked to note that Public Time is not part of the formal meeting of the Council and minutes cannot be produced. (Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 s 1 extended by the LGA Act 1972 s 100.)

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies given.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A number of errors were noted by the Chair in the minutes of the previous meeting: Cllr Bullen's name had been misspelled; Cllr Sinclair had been mistakenly taken as not in attendance; it was recalled that four members of the public had been present. The Chair therefore suggested that these errors be corrected and the Parish Council consider resolving these at the next meeting.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

6 UPDATE FROM DORSET COUNCIL

Cllr Roberts told the Parish Council that he is the lead member for Childrens' Services, and told the Parish Council that 484 children are currently in care in Dorset – a figure he noted was higher than most likely realise. Of these, 43% are with foster carers, and hence the number of children in the care of Dorset Council is high. There are 45 foster carers, which include both single people and couples. He told the Parish Council that Dorset Council is always looking for more people to talk to about the possibility of becoming foster carers, stating that foster care is preferable to children being placed within care in Dorset or placed in care outside of the county. It was clarified that foster carers could provide both short and long term care. He noted that the only area where there are many offers of care are for extremely young children, between 0 and 9 months – the Council therefore struggles finding carers for teenagers. He informed the Parish Council that Dorset Council works with an adoption body called Aspire, which works across Dorset, Bournemouth, Poole, and Christchurch. He told the meeting that it often took a long time for children to be placed with carers, but noted positively a recent success of four siblings being adopted by one family.

Cllr Roberts then discussed recent discussions on forming a combined authority with adjacent local authorities, explaining that this would be necessary to secure tier 3 devolution funds. Access to such funds does not require a mayor, but does require a combined authority with a cabinet system (in contrast to a committee system). He added that in such a structure, component councils of a combined authority could separately bid for funds, so that successful bids by Dorset Council would not entail automatic sharing with other local authorities that comprise the hypothetical combined authority. He noted that there were tens of millions of pounds available for infrastructure, and hence Dorset Council was actively pursuing this, speculating that other local authorities that could comprise the hypothetical combined authority were Bournemouth and Somerset.

Cllr Roberts then told the Parish Council that the first budget meeting would take place on Friday, at which the council would consider areas of overspend, noting that care was an area with overspend as this is demand lead and the council has a statutory duty to provide these services. He said that the process of the budget would be more difficult than the previous year, but that the sole aim was to not cut any services. He noted a current program of microsurfacing on roads (adding that this would look like the gravel had not been rolled in, which is because traffic will do this).

Cllr Roberts reminded residents that parents with children who wished to select specific schools starting next year would have to indicate this by the end of October. He also noted that there had recently been a referendum on a local plan for Chesil Bank, which had been approved with a large majority, though on a low turnout of approximately 19%. This would now go through Dorset Council, but was regarded as approved.

7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Vacancy

The Chair informed the Parish Council of the resignation of Cllr Thomas due to personal commitments. This leaves two casual vacancies; the Chair reminded the Parish Council that the next meeting would involve co-options to address these.

8 CLERK'S REPORT

8.1 Investigations into a new bus stop at Vurlands Farm.

The Clerk told the Parish Council that he had emailed WATAG regarding the bus stop at Vurlands Farm, and had not yet received a response. He explained that the email had been rather recent, and noted that WATAG was likely busy owing to the recently announced cancellation of and Ring and Ride bus service at the end of the year.

8.2 Bank signatories.

The Clerk told the Parish Council that while he was not yet a signatory on the Parish Council's bank account, he was now receiving paper copies of bank statements.

8.3 Interim audit.

The Parish Council noted the recommendations of the interim audit, but determined that as the expenditure of the Parish Council is relatively low, regular VAT claims are unlikely to be useful, and should continue on an ad hoc basis.

9 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Mr Brian Bowsher spoke as Chairman on behalf of the newly appointed Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SG). He told the Parish Council that the group had met in September. He told the Parish Council that there had been good progress, and the group had received feedback from Stinsford, Charmouth, and Askerville, and had clarified support from Dorset Council, particularly on mapping. He informed the Parish Council that they had formed two working groups; a finance group which is chaired by Sally Bowsher. This group will submit for funding from the locality, and request additional funding as needed. He added that this submission would be provided to the Parish Council to aid in the budget-setting process. The second working group relates to community engagement, and is chaired by Jackie Hunt. He noted that some work had been done on engaging existing community groups. The working group met on 22nd September, and focused on making sure they secured interaction with each village, recognising the heterogeneous needs and concerns of the individual villages. This engagement will involve drop in sessions at all three villages, likely on the evening of the 2nd of November, and the morning of Friday the 3rd of November. Once venues had been secured and confirmed, details would be provided to residents through the newsletter. He also informed the Parish Council that work on the logo and branding had taken place to give the plan a strong identity.

Cllr Bullen proposed the Parish Council resolve to support the steering group registering an expression of interest. Cllr Eonne seconded. **RESOLVED** unanimously.

11 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

1. Neighbourhood Watch and Community Police Report.

Nothing to report.

2. Allotments

PSPC noted the new tenancy agreements had been signed which gave recurring use of a plot, rather than the currently used annual contract.

3. Footpaths

Nothing to report.

4. Playing Field

The Parish Council was told the playing field had been tidied on two Saturdays in the previous month; that the monkey bars required painting due to rust; that the slide's woodwork required treatment, which may be a pressure-wash in the spring. The Parish Council was also told that the brambles had been addressed. The report on the playing field had recently been received, which raised no major concerns.

5. Transport

The Parish Council noted the recent announcement that Ring and Ride bus services would cease at the end of the year, and that at least three residents in Puncknowle use

this service. This service allows residents to do shopping and other errands on Sunday and to be dropped off at their door – a vital accommodation due to mobility issues which prevented them from using the regular bus service by alighting at the bus stop in Swyre. The belief was expressed that the Parish Council should advocate for Dorset Council to provide a grant similar to that provided by East Devon to the charity that runs the Ring and Ride bus service. It was noted that Chris Loder MP had taken an interest in this issue. It was noted that the Parish Council does not currently have anyone responsible for liaising with WATAG directly. The Parish Council recalled that when cessation of the service was mooted in the past, there had been discussions about hiring a taxi firm to replace the service, as this would not prove to be significantly more expensive. The Chair agreed to raise the matter with Litton Cheney Parish Council. A voluntary ride-share scheme was suggested as an alternative. It was noted that a long term solution would be required as demand for such a service would vary over time.

6. Village Hall.

The Parish Council was told that the AGM of the Village Hall would be the following Tuesday at 7 pm. It was noted that expenditure exceeded revenue in the previous year by £1290. This shortfall was funded by using reserves. It was noted that grant revenue had been available in the past, but this was generally for capital projects, and hence could not be relied upon for revenue expenditure. As a result, greater use of the hall would be needed to plug the gap. The Parish Council was told that a deep clean of the hall would be conducted soon.

7. Bridport Local Area Partnership.

The Parish Council was told that the Chair and Clerk had attended the most recent BLAP meeting, at which Chris Loder MP was in attendance. The Parish Council was told that the issue of speeding and bad signage on the coast road had been raised; Chris Loder MP had visited the area a couple of years prior to see the problems, but subsequent improvements had not materialised. The Chair noted that after the meeting, he had noticed mobile speed cameras in different spots than usual, and that they had been in place for at least 90 minutes. The Parish Council was informed that the next BLAP meeting would be attended by a representative of National Highways to discuss the A35; this is of interest to the Parish Council as it is the main link road in the county. It was noted that Chris Loder MP had asked for data obtained by the speed-watch, which the Clerk confirmed he had supplied, and that Chris Loder MP had confirmed receipt.

8. DAPTC

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that he had attended the DAPTC clerk's conference.

9. Community Website.

The Parish Council was informed that stakeholders in a proposed community website had met the previous Friday, which had been attended by Cllr Bullen, the Clerk, a representative of the Village Hall; Sally Bowsher, and Dianne. The Clerk had been instructed to provide information regarding the statutory implications of the Parish Council's involvement in a community website, and technical specifications of the existing website.

10. Emergency Planning.

The Emergency Planning document was now in PDF form and circulated. The Chair thanked Cllr Bullen on behalf of the Parish Council for the quality and depth of the document.

11 PLANNING

**Applications on which the Parish Council is being consulted:
Please note that in Planning Matters the Council acts as consultee of the
Principal Authority, the Principal Authority being the deciding body.**

1. APPLICATIONS:

- a. Application No: P/HOU/2023/05161
Location: Marco Polo House West Bexington Dorchester DT2 9DE
Proposal: Erection of timber outbuilding for incidental use

Cllr Sinclair proposed the Parish Council support the application. Cllr Marsh seconded. The Parish Council **RESOLVED** to support the application: 4 votes in favour; 0 votes opposed; 1 abstention.

2 DECISIONS:

- a. Application No: P/TRT/2023/05184
Location: Old Rectory Rectory Lane Puncknowle Dorset DT2 9BW
Proposal: T1 Sycamore – Fell

It was explained that this felling was proposed due to rot, and that an application was required due to a preservation order protecting all trees in the rectory.

- b. Application No: P/TRC/2023/05246
Location: Home Farm Rectory Lane Puncknowle Dorset DT2 9BW
Proposal: Poplar x 2 (T15 & T16) – Fell; Poplar x 15 - Repollard back to previous points

It was explained that there was a need to fell the trees as they had grown to a problematic size.

3 OTHER PLANNING ISSUES:

None.

12 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

It was noted that Swyre Road was in need of attention, which may be because the road is not a B road or a bus route. The Clerk was asked to draft an email about the quality of the road.

13 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

The Clerk was reminded of the need to draft a list of correspondence for the Parish Council to review. PSpC were told of important correspondence.

14 FINANCE

1	It was RESOLVED that the items listed below be authorised for payment:	
	Mr S Rose (Clerk's salary October)	£342.60
	Mr S Rose (Travel to BLAP and Parish Council Meeting, 22.7 miles)	£10.21
	Mrs Dianne Sinclair (Website management October)	£30.00
	Mr Ken Hussey (Q3 playing field inspection)	£40.00
	Chesil Beach Garden Services (Garden mowing x2, inv 3346)	£204.00
	Chesil Beach Garden Services (Garden mowing x2, inv 3420)	£204.00
	Total Cheques	£830.81

Proposed Cllr Sinclaire, seconded Cllr Marsh, AIF.

**Includes Employer's PAYE tax submitted to HMRC where appropriate*

3 Bank Reconciliation.

15 INFORMATION ITEMS

Cllr Buckland told the Parish Council that he would be meeting Chris Loder MP in three weeks. Cllr Marsh asked him to raise the issue of the Ring and Ride bus service; Cllr Sinclaire asked him to raise the issue of the bus stop at Vurlands Farm.

16 PUBLIC TIME

Please see item 1 above.

17 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next ordinary meeting at the village hall will be held on Tuesday 7th of November 2023 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.42pm.

Signed:

Dated: