

**MINUTES OF THE OKEFORD FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE PAVILION, CASTLE LANE
Tuesday 1st October 2024**

PRESENT: Cllrs R Rowe (RR Chair) Charley Read (CR Vice Chair) S Finklaire (SF) S Corben (SC) & R Chenery (RC)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sam Smith (PC Clerk)

ALSO PRESENT: 14 members of the public

WELCOME & APOLOGIES: Cllr Rowe welcomed everyone to the meeting. PC Cllr F Light (FL) was absent.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS: None

2. MINUTES: Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council agreed that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd of September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
Proposed: SC Seconded: CR

3. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Murcer attend the meeting and gave his reports as follows - I am a member and sit on the following Committees – School Transport Appeals & People and Health Overview. **Community Resilience** I had a meeting with Clare Jennings, Community Resilience Liaison Officer (clare.jennings@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) about establishing community hubs in village halls, schools, community buildings in times of local/national emergency. For example, during prolonged power cuts, creating a refuge where residents could keep warm, get hot food, charge mobile phones etc. Clare is keen to help villages produce 'Emergency Response Plans' to pull together resources, skills and expertise which could be very useful indeed in times of need. **Bids for community projects are now open** round 5 of DC's Capital Leverage Fund is now open and welcomes applications for projects which will provide new and improved facilities for communities and residents in the Dorset Council area – see Dorset Council website news page. The closing date for applications is 8th of September 2024. **Dorset Council declare Nature Emergency** work is underway to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy along with farmers, landowners and businesses to identify priorities, opportunities and actions to help recover nature in Dorset. **A Big Conversation** Dorset Council wants residents to help shape key priorities for the next 5 years, by holding a number of engagement events to hear people's views on growing our economy, providing high quality housing, responding to the climate crisis and supporting communities. Our closest event is on Sunday 15th of September 2024 at Sherborne Market. **What does the Governments housing target mean for Neighbourhood Plans?** with a change of Government there have been a number of changes to housing policy including a re-statement of housing targets for Dorset from 1,793 units per annum up to 3,230 almost double, but still with the emphasis on sustainable development. Whilst the issue hasn't been tested, DC would be cognisant of NP policies and limits when considering future development planning applications. I would suggest PCs take advice from Jo Witherdon as to what this means for their NP/planning statements. **Family Hubs** these are centres where families can get support with childcare, adult day care, wellbeing, benefits, finance all in one place. So far centres have been set up in Ferndown, Wimborne, Dorchester, Bridport, Weymouth and Swanage. I attend a meeting to discuss coverage in North Dorset and how we might plug that gap with virtual/mobile centres. The Vale Pantry is opening a larger site in Sturminster at the end of 2024 which hopefully will serve the Blackmore Vale including transport for those without a car or access to a car and public transport. **Audit and Governance Meeting Committee** DC accounts to July 2024 highlighted a year end shortfall of £8.4m which will be covered from reserves. The Council has commissioned a review from PWC to look at a 'Future Council' where more processes are carried out online/AI freeing up people to deliver frontline services. This project will have limited impact in the short term and will involve a good deal of investment in technology. **Steve Murcer, Councillor, Blackmore Vale Ward**
email: cllrsteve.murcer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: The issue of re-routing footpath 46 by Darknoll Farm is still pending and awaiting a final decision from Dorset Council. The landowner attended the PC meeting. After being provided with more information from the landowner, PC Cllrs now need to decide if they would like to stick with the original PC objection to the footpath move, or to retract the previous objection and support the change. The Clerk will circulate all the original correspondence to PC Cllrs to refresh everyone minds. The

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Clerk will collate Cllrs responses/thoughts and send an email to Alastair Bevan at DC with our final decision so the application can move forward. The Clerk will copy in the landowner with the PCs response. The issue of the road surface between the equestrian stables & Darknoll Farm was raised. The tarmac does not extend to the farm yard where a number of large public vehicles turn around. If Highways are visiting the village, it was requested that they assess this area while they are here.

4. UPDATES ON OPEN ITEMS:

Neighbourhood Planning: We cannot make progress with this matter until we have a better idea of the direction that the new 'National Planning Policy Framework' will take. Dorset Council also need to complete their own 'Local Plan'. RR attended a recent open session/presentation from DC in Durweston. DC will be sharing the full 'Draft Council Plan' in writing with all PCs from 16th October 2024. There will be an online feedback mechanism. Feedback is requested by the 8th of November 2024. This will be an agenda item for the next PC meeting to collate Cllrs responses.

Darknoll Lane: The lane is now much improved, but the bottom section still needs to be completed. SF to chase DC Highways for a return visit to complete the works. Some spoils from the work have been left on a resident's land which DC Highways also need to deal with.

The village shop: A questionnaire with regards to the shop will appear in the October 2024 edition of the Fippenny News. Is there an appetite in the village for a community run shop? The current owners will have access to the questionnaire results to enable them to formulate a plan going forward.

Horse warning signs: The Clerk/RR will contact Rolly Skeats at DC Highways to chase. The signs are ready, we are just waiting for them to be erected around the village.

Blocked Drains/Flooding/Highways issues in Village: We have been informed that the area (Lower Street) has been put forward for a drainage scheme and is within the top 10 jobs to be completed by DC Highways. Works are being completed in a priority, with the risk to property flooding completed first. DC Highways have been chased numerous times to fix a date. Grit bins in the area were discussed, if the drainage is not fixed soon there will be ice in winter from flooding. Do we need an extra bin for the area? Cllr Mercer agreed to help us chase up this issue with Highways. It was Proposed SC Seconded SF to purchase a temporary grit bin for the area to help with the inevitable ice and slime build up.

Resurfacing of Village Hall Car Park RR has established that there would be funding available from S106 monies for this project, but we need to ensure that no other work is required at Village Hall. Currently the hall floor is getting badly damaged from the car park surface (sand) We will need to apply for the money from DC, quotes are in the region of £21,000 approx. RR to seek confirmation that the pavilion S106 monies are separate to the Village Hall. It was agreed that a final decision regarding the car park needs to be made at the November PC meeting.

New Play Area Working Party/Bowey Phase 1 of the park is now open. Splintering from the old climbing frame has been highlighted in the recent safety inspection, this needs to be sorted. Before we can start Phase 2 more houses need to be occupied at Shillingstone Fields. RR will collect the completed bug boxes from Shillingstone School. The play area needs a strim including the grass mound. SC to organise this. We need to start preparing for phase 2, looking at the quotes we have received for this phase.

Plot of land Castle Lane: The PC is currently in the process of purchasing this land on behalf of the village. The funding for this will come from S106 monies. The plan is to put a footpath through the land, joining up the other existing footpaths and therefore keeping walkers safely off the road. The results from the land searches have been received, we are now just awaiting a completion date. DC are chasing an update and the Clerk will respond.

Noticeboards: The replacement board has arrived, and we are just waiting for it to be erected by SC.

Tree survey: We need to apply to DC to prune some of the trees by the Village Hall as they are in the village Conservation Area. We are waiting for DC planning to approved/not approve the works.

VJ/VE Day: VE Day, should we light the beacon? SC will take this on and set about recruiting some volunteers etc. SC to put an article/ad in the December Fippenny News.

Poor Lands Trust: The field is currently not registered with Land Registry by the PC or PLT. RR has passed the relevant documents on to the solicitors, who will register the land on our behalf.

5. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

5.1 Remembrance Day wreath: All PC Cllrs agreed that we should buy a poppy wreath for the war memorial. RR to ask FL if he would attend the service on behalf of the PC and lay the wreath.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: None

6.1 Planning Decisions & other planning matters: None

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7. CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT:

Payments to be authorised -

£435.59	S Smith (Clerks wages & expenses September 2024) BT
£107.40	HMRC PAYE BT
£37.93	British Gas (Pavilion) DD
£252.00	BDO LLP external audit fee 2024 BT
£125.00	CD Cowell (Bowey strimming of ditch) BT.

Receipts: The 2nd instalment of the precept **£14,510.00** has been paid into the NatWest account by DC. DC S106 monies **£62,000.00** has also been credited into the NatWest account (Castle Lane plot) The Clerk has submitted to HMRC a VAT reclaim for the recent play park equipment for **£15,000**. A reclaim for other VAT still needs to be submitted to HMRC going back to 2021.

The Clerk issued all PC Cllrs with a summary of the current PC financial situation. Balances in the PC accounts are Lloyds **£19,978.00** NatWest **£3,632.83** NatWest savings **£13,231.09**.

At our next PC meeting in November, we need to start discussing the budget/precept for 2025/26.

7.1 BDO LLP external audit report 2024: The Clerk has received notice from BDO LLP of the conclusion of the PC 2024 external audit. The Clerk has completed the following actions -

Prepared a "Notice of conclusion of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements. Published the Notice of conclusion along with the certified AGAR (sections 1, 2 and 3) on the PCs website. Has copies of the AGAR available for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum. Will ensure that sections 1, 2 and 3 of the published AGAR remain available for public access for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of publication. The Clerk highlighted to Cllrs the issues raised by the external audit and reassured them that the same mistakes would not be repeated in 2025.

8. REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS:

Village Hall Management Committee RC - nothing to report.

Rights of Way/Footpaths Officer: A site meeting had been requested with DC. The meeting had taken place with Jeremy Gartside in attendance only as PC Cllrs could not attend. A new gate access was agreed. Reinstating the footpath at the back of the Shillingstone Fields development still needs to be actioned. The PC need to arrange a meeting with Graham Stanley to discuss.

Recreation Ground/Pavilion: A large limb from a tree has come down at the recreation ground. It was agreed that the remaining tree now needs to be assessed for safety. The fallen limb has been made safe. The wood will be taken away by a local resident. Dogs on football pitch/rec grounds was raised. Persistent owners are letting their dogs foul on the grass and not picking it up. SC proposed a letter to send to offenders. SC to draft letter and send to RR for editing. Do we need some more waste/dog bins?

SC agreed to compile an itinerary of all the village waste bins to enable us to spot the gaps/weak areas.

Village Community Group (VCG): SF reported that the recent online auction raised £613 for the football club. The AGM has recently taken place, with the same officers returned. The VCG has some excess funds that they would like to put to good use. Another defibrillator? or some village bins? Possible locations for another defib were discussed.

PCC: No news

9. OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS OR THE CLERK: There is still a hole in the road to Belchawell where the springs pop up. The Clerk will ask DC Highways for an update. There is a general open meeting on the 15th of October 2024 in the Sports Pavilion to discuss the viability of a village skate park. The meeting has been advertised in the latest edition of the Fippenny News.

10. NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA: PC Budget/Precept 2025/26, village car park, defib, Bins

Okeford Fitzpaine Council resolved to note the date of the next meeting as **Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.30pm to be held in The Pavilion, Castle Lane** There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.05pm. Presentation to be held prior at **7pm**, further details will be on the published November agenda.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record, and signed –

Chairman presiding.....Date: