

MINUTES OF THE OKEFORD FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE PAVILION, CASTLE LANE Tuesday 2nd September 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs R Rowe (RR Chair) Charley Read (CR Vice Chair) F Light (FL) S Corben (SC) S Wheeler (SW)

APOLOGIES: PC Cllrs S Finklaire (SF) & S Harvey (SH)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sam Smith (PC Clerk) Dorset Councillor S Murcer (SM)

ALSO PRESENT: 29 members of the public

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS: Cllr SW – Darknoll Farm planning application (6)

2. MINUTES: Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
Proposed: CR Seconded: SW

3. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Murcer attended the meeting and reported as follows –
Dorset Council Local Plan - the public consultation opened on the 18th of August 2025 and will run until the 13th of October 2025. The plan will detail how Dorset Council will be aiming to meet the Government's target for house building. The draft plan maps out the areas that have been offered up for development, or the areas Dorset Council thinks are suitable for house building over the next 17 years. All these sites are not set in stone but only a proposal. At present DC are averaging building 1,500 new homes per year, the Government target is 3,284 per year in Dorset. Is there the workforce to build them? demand and developer capacity will dictate what happens next. 3 sites have been earmarked for Okeford Fitzpaine, this totals 177 new houses. All residents can go online and view the plan and comment in the consultation process. There are more sites suggested in the plan than needed to meet the target, so 50% will naturally fall away. The PC will also submit a comment/view on the plan, and this will be discussed at our October PC meeting. Dorset Council are holding public open sessions during the consultation, please see the PC noticeboard for dates.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: A number of residents from Commerwicke attended the meeting. The issue of the proposed 78 houses was raised. Residents have a number of concerns – infrastructure, traffic road safety, parking, sewage & drainage, the proposed footpath through Commerwicke, houses still unsold on Shillingstone Fields. Some residents feel that they have been mis sold properties at Commerwicke based on past promises from the developer. The owner of the barn raised the issue of the large tree at the corner of the Rec field; it needs some maintenance work undertaking – Cllr SC will look into this.

4. UPDATES ON OPEN ITEMS:

Bowey Play Park: Some more work still needs to be completed on the trampoline by the installer as the safety surface is lifting again. Spider frame – all agreed to not remove at this time, Cllr CR to take phase 2 of the play park project forward. It was agreed to go for the cheaper option on the swings and again with the multi play structure. Cllr CR to check with the supplier on the situation with the safety matting, is grass not sufficient? We still need to pay for the seesaw that has already been installed. Cllr CR to secure an installation date for the remaining equipment. Overgrown brambles still need cutting back, Cllr SC to organise.

Village waste bins: The Clerk has chased this matter again with Dorset Waste. Everything is in place for a waste bin to be installed by the phone box/shop, we are just waiting for DC Highways to install the bin.

Horse warning signs: We are still chasing DC Highways for horse warning signs for the village.

Drainage - Lower Street: The water is now flowing freely, but the liner in the front canal at Bowey is leaking. The water course is leaking somewhere underground. Volunteers cleared the ditch of vegetation on the 22/23rd August. A big thank you was said to these volunteers. A hole was subsequently identified in the concrete wall. Roy Parson & Bryan Evans have sealed this hole to see if this has an influence on the leaking water. There is a small chance that this might solve the flooding issue, and no further action will be needed. Cllr SF has obtained another quote should we need to go ahead and remove the silt. Cllr SW had suggested installing a liner instead on top of the silt. Therefore, no need to repair the clay liner. Cllr SW to come back to the next PC meeting with some more info on a liner. In the meantime, we need a bit of rain so we can see if the patched hole has helped.

Resurfacing of the Village Hall Car Park: Work on the car park has been completed. The contractor has since returned to make a few remedial repairs.

Transfer of School playing field to the PC: DC have submitted an application to the Secretary of State to transfer the land into PC ownership, but it must remain as a playing field for 10yrs. The transfer fee is £1 plus legal fees. We are waiting for news.

Neathermead footpath: Cllr RR has obtained the Land Registry documents, but it is still not clear on the plan who is responsible for the footpath. All OFPC records/minutes show that Dorset Council is responsible for the path. Cllr RR has submitted a FOI request to DC to see if we can obtain the paperwork that is associated with the transfer of the land from DC to the PC.

Metal slide at the Rec: Cllr SC has re looked at slide. He suggested an option of digging out around the steps and the centre metal support. A thorough inspection could then take place. If the metal support is in good condition, then this could be concreted around. Covers could also be placed over the steps to make them nonslip. Cllr SC agreed to obtain a quote and a plan of work. The Clerk can then approach ROSPA and see if these proposed amendments will pass their safety inspection before any repairs take place.

5. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

5.1 PC Orchard: Initially the plan was to have a pavement/path on the outside, but maybe the path could instead be inside the hedge? If the hedge was kept low, then it would be visible from the road and give direct access to the rec ground. The whole area needs to be clear of brambles etc then we can see the area that we are dealing with. The Clerk has recently organised some ground clearance in another PC & will pass the contact details on to Cllr SC.

5.2 PC website: George Weeks has informed the PC that he can no longer commit to maintaining the PC website and emails on our behalf. Cllr SW offered to do some research into possible solutions going forward.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: P/FUL/2025/03574 Land North of Castle Avenue - **Erect 78 dwellings**, form vehicular and pedestrian access, landscaping, open space and drainage attenuation. All PC Cllrs voted to **object** to this application. Cllr RR read out the PC comments and thoughts on this application which will be uploaded to the DC planning portal in the morning. This will be able to be viewed online by all residents. Proposed: SC Seconded: SW

New Tree Preservation Order TPO/2025/0065 Land North of Castle Avenue Tree Preservation Order 2025 – **Oak**

Confirmation Of **Tree Preservation Order TPO/2025/0026** Land at Barkhill Farm, DT11 0RT Tree Preservation Order 2025

P/FUL/2025/04100 Darknoll Farm DT11 0RP - Conversion of area of barn to create 4 self-catering holiday pods. Cllr SW abstained from the vote. All remaining Cllrs agreed that they supported the application. Proposed: CR Seconded: SC

P/HOU/2025/04892 Proposal: erect single storey rear extension. Location: Castle Cottage Castle Lane DT11 0RL All Cllrs voted to support this application. Proposed: FL Seconded: SC

7. CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT:

Payments to be authorised –

£27.02 British Gas (pavilion)

£24.40 British Gas (pavilion)

£34.41 British Gas (pavilion)

£598.30 S Smith (Clerks wages July & expenses)

£615.25 S Smith (Clerks wages August, expense & backed pay rise to April 2025)

£7.16 HMRC PAYE

£4.25 Lloyds Bank (monthly bank charges) x 2

£25.00 Water 2 Business

£7.55 SSE bus shelter electric

£92.93 SSE pavilion electric

£8.64 SSE pavilion electric

£259 Parish Mag Fippenny News

£616.81 NFU – motor insurance

£329.52 JC Hardy Pavillion outside lights

£35,388.00 (inc VAT) Rawlsbury Developers Village Hall car park

40.81 SSE bus shelter electric

£258 Defib Store defibrillator battery

212.64 Fireline – fire safety check Pavillion
£29.49 VJ Day wreath
£6.99 Roy Parsons PostFix ditch repair
£28.09 Strimmer wire Alan Frampton
£47.00 Rachael Rowe - land registry documents Nethermead

Received: Dorset Council S106 monies **£29,490** (exc VAT) village hall car park
£60 Fippenny News advertising.
Balances in the PC accounts are Lloyds Bank **£12,730.04** NatWest **£13,580.89**
NatWest savings **£36,003.69**

7.1 Closure of the PC NatWest accounts: This is still ongoing. The Clerk has spoken to NatWest today & the accounts should be closed with the balances transferred to Lloyds in the next 7 days.

Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025: NJC has agreed to the new payscales (Clerk) to be backdated to 1st April 2025. It was agreed by all PC Cllrs to increase the Clerks pay as recommended and back date the pay rise. Proposed: SC Seconded: SW
Audit 2025 BDO: The auditor has come back with a number of questions to The Clerk with regards to the 2023/24 accounts. These have been answered.

8. REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS:

Village Hall Management Committee: Nothing to report.
Rights of Way liaison/Footpath Officer: Jeremy Gartside did not attend the meeting. Cllr RR to contact Graham Stanley re an application that he has submitted for S106 monies for village stiles.
Tree Officer: Nothing to report.
Recreation Ground/Pavilion: Cllr SC stated that the new pavilion kitchen is completed. Thank you to Community Group for funding this project. The Pavilion has also been re decorated. The Football Club funded the new fridge.
Village Community Group (VCG): Nothing to report.
PCC: The Church - nothing to report.

9. OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS OR THE CLERK: an email has been received regarding general village maintenance. Cllr RR to deal with.

10. NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA: Playdells planning application, Dorset Local plan – PC comments

Okeford Fitzpaine Council resolved to note the date of the next meeting as **Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 7.30pm to be held in The Pavilion, Castle Lane**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.20pm.

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

Chairperson presiding..... Date: