

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

PRESENT: Cllrs R Rowe (RR Chair) Charley Read (CR Vice Chair) S Wheeler (SW) S Harvey (SH) S Corben (SC)

APOLOGIES: Dorset Councillor S Murcer (SM) & PC Cllrs S Finklaire (SF) & F Light (FL)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sam Smith (PC Clerk)

ALSO PRESENT: 3 members of the public

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS: None

2. MINUTES: Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th November 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
Proposed SW Seconded CR

3. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Murcer did not attend the meeting or send a report in advance.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: A resident raised the issue of the current condition of Little Lane. Over the last 2 years the traffic has increased, a new livery yard & planning permission granted for 4 more houses. Mud is blocking the drains. Residents have had a problem getting Dorset Council to assist. The Lane is adopted/owned by Dorset Council. The surrounding land and the lane are being regularly flooded. Potholes are appearing and are large. Residents need to report these issues online via the DC website. The PC Clerk will contact DC Highways to request a site visit to see if some assistance can be forthcoming.

4. UPDATES ON OPEN ITEMS:

Bowey play park: Cllr CR is moving forward with phase 2; we are waiting for confirmation of an installation date from the contractor. The overgrown brambles still need to be strimmed. Cllr SC will seek to obtain a quote from the contractor who recently cleared the orchard.

Village waste bins: The Clerk was due to meet with Dorset Waste along with Cllr SF in the village. Dorset Waste was 45 mins late; at this point the Clerk & Cllr SF had left. The new waste bin might have to be re located (eg: on a wall) as Dorset Waste are unable to secure it into the pavement. It was suggested that this should be on the side of the museum. Clerk to keep chasing DW.

A new PC website & email: The Clerk has obtained a quote from a recommended website provider company. The cost quoted is **£499 plus VAT** for start/set up of a new website, then **£299 plus VAT** per annum going forwards. The website and email need to be supplied by separate companies for security reasons. It was agreed to go ahead with the quote for the new website and to deal with the email situation at a later date. This new website will be a PC website not a village website. Clerk to action.

Proposed SC seconded SW

Post box at sports pavilion: A correspondence address for village Land Registry documents etc. Cllr SF has contacted the Royal Mail, we are waiting for a reply. We could also use this address for mower tax etc. The post box could be sited on the pavilion gate or building wall.

Neathermead footpath: It has been confirmed through Land Registry, DC & PC documents that the footpath behind Nethermead is Dorset Council's responsibility. The Clerk & Cllr RR are gathering information and documents regarding the land surrounding the path for our records. Cllr RR has emailed DC re the crumbling footpath, but to date they have not responded.

PC orchard: Re-laying of the hedge & scrub clearance has taken place. No trees have been touched. The Blackthorn has been left in the middle. Should we remove this and plant some fruit trees? all agreed yes. There is no boundary fence on the recreation field side. Cllr SC has obtained a quote to put fence along to secure the boundaries. The quote for this was **£4,704 inc VAT** (fencing & a solid footpath with wooden edging) All agreed a good price. Cllr SC to check for wheelchair/pram access if we install the recommended gate. Section 106 monies can hopefully be used to fund this work, Cllr RR to check with DC.

Proposed SW Seconded SH

Metal slide at the rec: Cllr SC is still investigating repairs/alterations of the slide and will report back at next PC meeting.

5. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

5.1 Future development of the recreation grounds & pavilion: A design working group needs to be formed going forwards. Section 106 money is available to fund the project. We need to have a plan in place for when funding becomes available, or other groups e.g. in Sturminster Newton might try to claim some of the funding for their own projects. We start with a blank sheet & aim high. Indoor sports, parish office, tennis courts, skate park etc. Previous S106 group members will be approached to join, along with other members of the community. This is a project for 2026.

5.2 SID/Speeding/20mph issues: The SID has been reconfigured to 20 mph. Another 3rd SID site has been requested by the Speedwatch team. The Clerk will request for the Police speeding van to visit the village. The Clerk to contact George Weeks to clarify the way forward. All Cllrs agreed that extra Speedwatch sessions are the way forward, not another location for the SID. The 20 mph sign/post has been removed from Higher Street, we don't know by whom or when this occurred.

5.3 Little Lane/Mill Lane: see public questions.

5.4: Bowey water run off: The recent 'bund' built by Chris Norton is washing away. Flooding from the field is creating run off to the houses. We have already cleared the ditch. Should the bund be rebuilt higher? The answer was yes. Cllr SF to contact Chris Norton to discuss further as she initially raised the issue.

Grit bin request for Commerwicke: A request has been made to the PC for a grit bin at Commerwicke. This estate is owned by a housing association, and residents pay an annual fee to a maintenance company. The highway here is not the responsibility of DC or the PC. Residents will need to fund their own grit bin or approach the management company for the estate.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: P/FUL/2025/03741 Proposal: Change of Use from Education (Class F1a) to 1 no. dwelling (Class C3) Location: Okeford Fitzpaine C Of E Primary School, The Cross DT11 0RF

P/FUL/2025/06271 Proposal: Erect 1 no. Dwelling (Demolish outbuilding), erect detached garage/carport and form new vehicle access. Location: Banbury Cross Boarding Kennels & Cattery Angers Lane, Fiddleford DT10 2BY. The PC had **no objections** to both applications.

7. CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT:

Payments to be authorised –

£37.08	British Gas (pavilion)
£25.00	Water2Business
£531.35	S Smith (Clerks wages November & expenses)
£4.25	Lloyds Bank (monthly bank charges)
£672.00	Orchard clearance scrub & hedge Spiteri & Sons Ltd
£75.00	DAPTC devolution conference

Received: £30 x 2 Fippenny News advertising.

The balances in the Lloyds Bank are - current account £14,532.57 savings account £60,011.84.

7.1 2026/27 budget/precept: The Clerk distributed a draft proposed budget/precept document. We need to submit our precept request by the end of January 2026. 2026 projects include – PC website, Castle Lane plot, school field, pavilion development. 1 year's precept in reserve is ideal. The PC has excess funds currently which could fund a number of the 2026 projects. The precept has been £29,020 for past 2 years. DC are trying off load assets to PC but there is not really anything on offer that the PC would wish to take on. After a discussion it was agreed to increase the precept to cover inflation. 3.8% The precept will rise to £30,122.76 but we had an increased number of houses (taxpayers) in the village in 2024/25, so there will be a decrease of £2.25 per Band D household for 2026/27.

Proposed SW seconded SC

8. REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS:

Village Hall Management Committee: Unauthorized car parking at the village hall.- A camper van and cars from village houses are using the car park overnight. Only 1 property has permission to park there on the grass and another 1 has access to a garage. Both of these pay a peppercorn rent. Cllr SH will investigate.

Rights of Way liaison/Footpath Officer: Jeremy Gartside attend the meeting – Shillingstone Fields has 3 footpath exits. Two are looking good with paths. 1 across at the back is totally overgrown. A proper pedestrian access to is still needed for access to the village from the estate. The blocked gate at the back of Bowey now has a style. The railings on to Lower Street have been replaced. There is a suspected water leak at Higher Street to the village hall, and the footpath has some tree root damage.

Tree Officer: Nothing to report.

Recreation ground/pavilion: The football club are currently at the top of their league.

Village Community Group (VCG): Welcome packs are currently being re printed.

PCC: Christmas - December 6th festive foliage and lights display from 3pm.

9. OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS OR THE CLERK: None

10. NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA: PC website/email, post box at Pavillion.

Okeford Fitzpaine Council resolved to note the date of the next meeting as **Tuesday 3rd February 2025 at 7.30pm to be held in The Pavilion, Castle Lane. Please note that there will be NO PC meeting in January 2026.**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.45pm.

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

Chairperson presiding..... Date: