

**MINUTES OF THE OKEFORD FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE PAVILION, CASTLE LANE  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs R Rowe (RR Chair) Charley Read (CR Vice Chair) S Harvey (SH) & George Norris (GN)  
**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs S Wheeler (SW) S Corben (SC) & T Hood (TH)  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dorset Councillor S Murcer (SM) & Sam Smith (PC Clerk)  
**ALSO PRESENT:** 4 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 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.  
Proposed SC Seconded SH

**3. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Cllr Murcer reported as follows – complaints about poor customer service is a re occurring theme amongst residents with regards to Dorset Council. The Council which ultimately provides a 'service' appears to have no aspiration to provide a good level of customer service. This just doesn't seem to be a top priority. Cllr SM is meeting with DCs 'Head of Customer Experience' to discuss this matter further. The last DC customer experience survey was in 2023; the council needs to be more focused on providing a service eg: answering emails promptly etc. Cllr SM was previously on 2 DC committees 'People and Health' and 'Pensions' Cllr SC stated that he would like to take on something a bit more active and rewarding and he is now part of the 'North Dorset Planning Committee'. There is a 'Meet your MP' Simon Hoare session in Shillingstone on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 10am. There have recently been 2 large property fires in Hazelbury Bryan & Sherborne. The current ongoing fire brigade consultation is proposing the closure of 4 Dorset fire stations. There would only be 1 fire engine in Sturminster Newton, and this would need to serve road accidents as well. For more information - [www.dwfire.org.uk/proposed-station-closures](http://www.dwfire.org.uk/proposed-station-closures). **Cllr Steve Murcer** cllrsteve.murcer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** No items raised.

**4. UPDATES ON OPEN ITEMS:**

**Bowey play park:** Cllr SH to liaise with Cllr SC with regards to arranging a village volunteer working party to complete repairs and grounds maintenance at the play park. The Clerk to check that the trampoline is now repaired.

**Village waste bins:** No progress. The PC have decided to temporarily abandon the idea due to the lack of support and action from Dorset Waste. The planned road works in the centre of the village will not help. We can come back to this matter at a later date.

**A new PC website & email:** The Clerk is liaising with the new website company; progress is slow but moving forward. The Clerk attended a Teams meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to discuss the new site further. The new site is currently being built. The Clerk needs to collate and forward the proposed content to the website creator. The Clerk requested photos and bios from PC Cllrs. Drone footage would be nice to use on the front page.

**Post box at sports pavilion:** The post box is now installed on the pavilion outside wall.

**Little Lane:** A site meeting is needed with DC Highways. The Clerk has requested a site visit with Rolly Skeats at DC Highways but to date a reply has not been received. DC Highways are ignoring the PC, and we haven't managed to secure a site visit to date.

**Electric supply at the bus stop/museum:** The Clerk has requested with SSE the termination of the bus stop electric. SSE are doing everything they can to slow this whole process down and we now paying for electric that we are no longer even using. The Clerk to chase again and cancel the Direct Debit asap to hopefully force some action from SSE.

**PC orchard:** At the last PC meeting Cllr SW had suggested a site visit to discuss this issue further. S106 monies can be used again for the continuing works. It was suggested that the works should be moved on asap to avoid further prices rises. Cllr SC was absent from this meeting so further discussion take place in May.

**Metal slide at the rec:** The annual play park safety report is booked for May 2026. Cllr SC was absent from the meeting to discuss further.

**5. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

**5.1 Adopt PC IT policy:** Assertion 10 is a new declaration that councils need to make from the 2025/26 AGAR onwards, Assertion 10 brings together a series of expectations around digital, data and information governance. Councils need to have an IT policy that covers the secure and lawful use of digital devices within the council. All Cllrs agreed to adopt the policy that the Clerk is proposing. The new policy will be posted on the PC website.

**5.2 Review of the PC Financial Regulations:** The Clerk has updated the current PC Financial Regulations document. All Cllrs agreed to adopt the updated version. The new policy will be posted on the PC website.

**5.3 Signage at the end of Darknoll Lane:** Two vehicles have recently been stuck at the end of Darknoll Lane, and they had to be freed by a tractor. It is not very clear that this section of the Lane is a 'Drove Road' open to off road vehicles and for herding animals. Erecting some signage has been suggested. It was agreed that this was exceptional circumstances and is unlikely to be repeated. Agreed to monitor going forward.

**5.4 Defibrillators:** The pavilion defibrillator is now situated on the outside wall. A suggestion has been made of siting another defibrillator at Mary Gardens. Cllr SH stated that certain rules apply with regards to spacing between other defibrillators. Cllr SH To liaise with SC on this matter.

**6. Planning applications received & updates: P/PIP/2026/01968** Location: Banbury Cross Cottage, Angers Lane, Fiddleford Proposal: conversion of a building to create 1 dwelling (permission in principle)

**No objections** from all PC Cllrs. The centre of the village at The Cross will soon see some major road works & road closures, drainage will be installed for the Pleydells site. Access for the bus services at this time was raised, there had been talk of the bus turning around at the pub. Cllr RR has referred this issue back to DC Highways for a solution. MP Simon Hoare has written to Dorset Council on behalf of the PC questioning the village 3 tier status.

**7. CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT:****Payments to be authorised –**

<b>£48.97</b>	British Gas (pavilion)
<b>£25.00</b>	Water2Business
<b>£516.56</b>	S Smith (Clerks wages April & expenses)
<b>£4.25</b>	Lloyds Bank (monthly bank charges)
<b>£92.61</b>	SSE bus stop/museum electric
<b>£252.00</b>	JC Hardy defibrillator at pavilion
<b>£5,379.60</b>	Spiteri & Sons Orchard
<b>£50.00</b>	John Beresford thank you Tesco voucher

**Received:** S106 monies **£4,483.00** (Orchard work ex VAT) Fippenny News advertising total **£154.**

The first instalment of the 2026/27 precept **£15,061.38** The balances in the Lloyds Bank are - current account **£22,060.37** savings account **£60,146.79**

**8. REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS:**

**Village Hall Management Committee:** Cllr SH was elected at the recent AGM as the new Chair. The next meeting is in June.

**Rights of Way liaison/Footpath Officer:** Jermery Gartside did not attend the meeting but sent a report as follows - Last week I met with head Ranger Graham at the chicken shed site. He now has funds to improve the ROW in and around the housing estate. This means we can replace all perimeter stiles with gates and reinstate and upgrade some of the FPs. He also has some money to improve other ROW in the village.

**Tree Officer:** A large tree at the back of the recreation ground needs attention.

**Drainage & infrastructure maintenance:** Drainage running from the 'Pound' has issues and it is being monitored. A big thank you again to Roy Parsons and Bryan Evans.

**Recreation ground/pavilion:** Cllr SC was absent from the meeting.

**Village Community Group (VCG):** The next meeting is on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**PCC:** Nothing to report

**9. OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS OR THE CLERK:** The grass at Neathermead is long overdue a cut. The land in question is owned by Sovereign. Cllr RR to contact Sovereign.

**10. NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:** 2026 PC audit

Okeford Fitzpaine Council resolved to note the date of the next meeting as **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 at 7.30pm to be held in The Pavilion, Castle Lane.**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.10pm.

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

Chairperson presiding..... Date: .....