

MINUTES OF THE OKEFORD FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE PAVILION, CASTLE LANE Tuesday 7th July 2026

PRESENT: Cllrs R Rowe (RR Chair) Charley Read (CR Vice Chair) S Corben (SC) T Hood (TH) S Wheeler (SW) S Harvey (SH) & George Norris (GN) **APOLOGIES:** Sam Smith (PC Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: Dorset Councillor S Murcer (SM) & members of the public.

1. APPOINT A PC CLLR AS THE CLERK: The Clerk was absent from this meeting as she was on holiday. Cllr TH was appointed as a temporary Clerk for the duration of the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS: None

3. MINUTES: Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 2nd of June 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
Proposed SW Seconded CR.

4. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Murcer reported as follows –

Northern Planning Meeting - I attended my first planning meeting and along with Anne Powell spoke against a TPO on a Silver Birch in the Church of the Holy Rood Churchyard. The TPO was upheld, but important learnings we need to consider for future applications. Changes to the current planning rules are in the pipeline. In the future all small developments will be delegated to a Planning Officer for a final decision. The definition of 'small' has not been clarified. PC Cllrs thought that this would give more power to Officers and less input from residents etc.

Dorset's Local Plan, the next stage - Last August the Local Plan consultation was launched when sites were put forward for potential development by landowners. Town and parish councils and residents were asked to send in their views on the proposed sites. DC received 10,000 responses. On the 13th July 2026 there will be the Councillor briefing on the next stage of the Local Plan. I am not clear at this stage what this briefing will involve. It could be further insight into site selection or a timetable for site selection, I just don't know, but rest assured I will keep you advised.

Dorset Council Financial 2025/2026 - Good news, the Council had a small underspend of £169,000. The headline figure should be treated with caution as several major service areas continue to face underlying financial pressure. Headlines: Children overspend £3.914m, Adults and Housing overspend £5.930m, Place underspend £7.525m. Expenditure within Place (highways, school travel, waste services) was curtailed to achieve a breakeven position. Planned savings across the Council were budgeted to be £36m and £21m achieved.

Cllr Steve Murcer cllrsteve.murcer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: A resident raised a planning issue with regards to **P/PABA/2026/03162**
Proposal: erect agricultural barn Location: Shillingstone Lane. The resident was advised to submit their comments online via the DC planning portal.

5. UPDATES ON OPEN ITEMS:

Bowey play park: The June 'tidy up' volunteer session has been rescheduled to September due to the hot weather. It was agreed that strimming of the play park mound was not the regular volunteer mowers responsibility. A number of volunteers have come forward offering to complete the job. Cllr SC to organise.

A new PC website & email: The site is currently being built with the Clerk collating the content. Pictures and bios still need to be supplied by PC Cllrs. A dummy/draft website should be available soon. Hopefully the site can go live before the next PC meeting.

Water leak at the pavilion: Going Underground (contractors) attended the site & dug a hole and replaced some water pipe. They stated that the leak was fixed. Unfortunately, this was not the case and water is still escaping. The water meter is now off again. Should we just replace the whole length of pipe from the meter to building? Cllr RR to request Wessex Water come and test the meter. A large amount of water is being lost, but there is no evidence anywhere of a leak. Do we pay Going Underground or raise a complaint, they obviously didn't check they had fixed the leak or has another leak popped up? Cllr S Corben. along with a volunteer. will dig their own hole along the pipe length to try and locate the leak before we pay out any more money to contactors.

PC orchard: Cllr SC has obtained 1 quote for the next stage of the project. We need the 2nd quote before a decision can be made as the funding will come from S106 monies. There is a manhole cover by the recreation slide (sewage pipe) should it be locked? The Orchard needs another strim & mulching. The Precept might need to increase in the future to cover the PCs new areas of responsibility. All agreed to going ahead with the strimming and a lock on the manhole cover.

Metal slide at the rec: Cllr SC will order the parts to complete the modifications. The Clerk has contacted the PCs insurance provider. The issues highlighted on the 2026 report must be rectified asap. A PC Cllr/volunteer needs to agree to inspect the rec playground equipment and submit a written report each month to the Clerk. Modifications to the slide can go ahead on this condition. Cllr SC agreed to report monthly on the slide condition to the Clerk for insurance purposes.

6. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

6.1 Okeford Fitzpaine.org website: This is currently the Village Hall website (M Burt) Cllr SH would like to obtain the password. Historically this was also the PC website, but the PC now has its own.gov.uk site. Should the .org website be discontinued? The Village Hall could have a page on the new PC website. Cllr SH to approach Tim Burt who is thought to maintain the site and have a discussion on the best way forward.

6.2 Possible replacement of small grass mower: Rob Corben stated that the little mower is coming to end of its life. This mower is owned by the PC. Cllr SC will ask the volunteer mowers to keep an eye out for a replacement 2nd hand. If an opportunity comes up, then the PC can be approached. Price not confirmed yet.

6.3 Transfer of ownership of the school playing fields: The PC have applied to take over ownership from Dorset Council. The Secretary of State needs to give permission for the transaction to go ahead. Cllr RR had received confirmation that the SS is favourable & the land would be transferred on a freehold basis. The field must be kept for 10 years as playing field. The PC will need to talk to St Loe & the new owners of the old school building regarding access & use. All PC Cllrs are happy to progress with the application. Transfer costs not yet confirmed.

7. Planning applications received: P/PABA/2026/03162 Proposal: erect agricultural barn Location: Shillingstone Lane – information only.

P/HOU/2026/02990 Proposal: proposed carport and store to replace existing approved unbuilt carport under permission 2/2019/1735/FUL. Location: Pleydells Farm, Norton House DT11 0RQ – PC Cllrs thought that the description of a carport was a bit misleading. The structure is very large.

P/MPO/2026/03601 Proposal: discharge requirements of planning obligation dated 25/11/2019 relating to Plots 12-15, 20-26 & 40-42 of planning permission number 2/2018/0458/OUT to demolish existing buildings and develop land by the erection of up to 45 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure. Site of Shillingstone Poultry Farm – discharge of conditions. The PC had some concerns with possible asbestos on the site. Cllr RR will submit the PC comments via the planning portal.

7.1 Planning updates: Planning appeal in respect of erect 78 dwellings, form vehicular and pedestrian access, landscaping, open space and drainage attenuation at Land North of Castle Avenue/adjacent Commerwicke. The PC has until the 24th of July 2026 to submit a response. It was agreed to seek advice from the planning consultant Jo Witherden. A cost of up to £1,000 agreed. Proposed SW Seconded SH All Cllrs to send bullet points to Cllr RR to collate. Simon Hoare MP had received a reply to his letter to Dorset Council re our tier 3 status. A vague reply, which basically stated that the tiers would not be re assessed while the Local Plan is under review.

Review of **Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan** - no comments from PC Cllrs.

8. CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT: The Clerk was absent from the meeting but added a report on her return, see below.

9. REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS:

Village Hall Management Committee: A meeting in August is planned.

Rights of Way liaison/Footpath Officer: Jermery Gartside did not attend the meeting or send a report.

Tree Officer: Darknoll Lane- a tree down has been reported to DC.

Recreation ground/pavilion: Cllr SC waiting for a quote for the overhanging tree at the Rec. The front door handle has been bent & might need to be replaced, the door is also sticking.

Drainage & infrastructure maintenance: Roy & Bryan are keeping an eye on everything. 27/28th June drain clearance day postponed till September 2026. The village is still experiencing frequent power cuts. Apparently, the supply cables need to be upgraded by the electric company.

Village Community Group (VCG): The Repair Café is on the last Saturday of every month. A school uniform swap is planned.

PCC: Nothing to report

10. OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS OR THE CLERK: Rob Corben stated that the bus shelter at Fiddleford might need some attention/repairs.

11. NEXT MEETING’S AGENDA:

Okeford Fitzpaine Council resolved to note the date of the next meeting as **1st September 2026 at 7.30pm to be held in The Pavilion, Castle Lane. Please note:** The OFPC does not normally meet in August. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.55pm.

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

Chairperson presiding..... Date:

8. FINANCIAL:

Payments since the last meeting –

£30.34	British Gas (pavilion)
£618.40	S Smith (Clerks wages June & expenses)
£22.20	HMRC PAYE
£4.25	Lloyds Bank (monthly bank charges)
£121.88	SSE pavilion electric
£340.00	Fippenny News
£89.62	SSE outstanding bus shelter electric

The balances in the Lloyds Bank are - current account **£17,641.65** savings account **£60,197.06**.