



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

11 DECEMBER 2023

COMRADES HALL

PRESENT: Cllr. Rowland Hibbard (Chairman), Cllr. Jacqui Sewell (Vice Chair), Cllr. Tim Bassett, Cllr. Rebecca Burt, Cllr. Steve Chubb, Cllr. Stephen Curtis, Cllr. Stuart Curtis, Cllr. Rick Dyke, Cllr. Andrew Frampton, Cllr. Bob Harris, Cllr. Stefan Nikolov, Cllr. Sonia Raymond, Cllr. Nathalie Roberts, Cllr. Yvonne White.

ATTENDANCE: Councillor Simon Christopher (Dorset Council), Helen Cudmore (Clerk).

The Meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and was opened by Councillor Hibbard. There were five members of the public present. Councillor Hibbard welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from PCSO Bishop and from Councillor Hughes and unanimously approved by the Parish Council.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS, DISPENSATIONS AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS UPDATES

a. To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors and employees on matters to be considered at the Meeting.

None.

b. To receive requests for dispensations.

None.

c. To grant any requests for dispensation.

None.

d. To receive any updates to the Register of Interests from Councillors.

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13 November were confirmed as a true record, unanimously approved by the Council and duly signed by Councillor Hibbard.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Hibbard expressed his thanks to Councillor Stuart Curtis, Rob Hedditch and Brian Hesketh for their considerable efforts during the recent severe weather and flooding. Councillor Hibbard stated that he wished to raise an emergency item which was the recent flooding and the damage caused within the Grouped Parish area. Councillor Hibbard stated that Brian Hesketh had been instrumental in helping those affected by flooding, most notably in Greenham and that he had since emailed with a number of practical suggestions for improvement for the future. Councillor Hibbard stated that he would read aloud the email and he recommended that the points raised be passed on to Highways.

1. The bridge on Crewkerne Road still had plenty of headroom at the height of the flooding and the floodplain areas along Marksmead did their job. I imagine there is a schedule for that to be inspected every few years and dredging carried out as required.

Councillor Bassett stated that there is no schedule and the last quote received was too expensive. Councillor Chubb asked if it needed doing again, Councillor Bassett stated that it did.

2. A little further along Crewkerne Road, towards Netherhay, gully work was undertaken not that long ago, and although helpful, the water volume exceeds the capacity to cope despite having cleared the gully in anticipation of heavy rain. It is well placed but needs a considerable upgrade in flow capacity.

3. The bridge on Chard Road was flowing freely before the event, with very little debris in the concrete bed. The gullies had been cleared and rodded by residents in advance of winter and to clear autumn leaves. At the height of the flow the water level was at the top of the bridge arch, being at full capacity, though this did not lead to anything but a small proportion of the road flooding. That flooding came from water fast flowing down Chard Road, in both directions into gullies which empty into drains which themselves drain into the river. Most of the time they empty into the river above flow height. However, when the river is in full spate those outfalls, especially opening mostly at right angles to the river flow (rather than facing downstream to create a draw) hit a wall of water and cannot drain effectively, so the road floods. We relieved that by digging a drainage trench in a garden to drain the road by water flowing over the pavement, thence into the river, this brought the flooding down to kerb height. It would be useful to remodel part of the footpath on that side with dropped kerbs to road level and drainage straight into the river.

4. During the pandemic a site meeting was held at Drimpton Cross with Dorset Highways and Councillor Christopher. I mentioned the effect that neglected ditches and blocked drainage along Burstock Lane has at times of heavy rain with water far in excess of the ability of the double gullies at Drimpton Cross to take it all. Councillor Christopher informed me that they were looking at all that. I can confirm that Burstock Lane drainage has deteriorated further since then. Remedial work is long overdue.

5. The brook beside Chard Road, just down from Spearmead, was gushing onto Chard Road, adding to the flow, the culvert into which it flows could not cope.

Councillor Sewell stated that she was very concerned about the recent severe weather and drove up to Birdsmoorgate herself and had noticed that there was a road drain opposite Greenham which was on the high point of the highway and not on the low point and stated that the whole area needs looking at and work undertaken. Councillor Bassett stated that four houses in Marksmead lost the use of their toilets during the severe weather as had been previously predicted and although assurances were provided by South West Water, it was not the case. Councillor Harris stated that he had attended the Drimpton Cross meeting with Blair Turner and although that particular drain was not discussed, the year before he had spoken to Blair Turner about the drain at the corner of Burstock Road and Chard Road and Blair Turner stated that he had tested it and the water ran freely. Councillor Harris stated that he had informed Blair Turner that water was running over the top and that Blair Turner had blamed the farmer for not clearing the ditches. Councillor Hibbard stated that he had spoken to Rob Hedditch as the Flood Warden and he reported that he had walked up Burstock Lane to see where the water was coming from and could clearly see water coming from a farmer's field. Councillor Hibbard stated that Rob Hedditch had spoken to the farmer who told him that he was unable to clear out the ditch as badger sets had been identified and he was not allowed to touch the ditch.

Councillor Hibbard stated that the email from Maria Tolley had been circulated and stated that a site meeting had been held there some time ago and the gulley and ditches were cleared out. Councillor Hibbard stated that it seems as though they are blocked again and causing problems and that another site meeting would be helpful. Councillor Sewell stated that the Parish Council needs to reinforce the fact that the situation is getting worse and that they are not being jetted frequently enough. Councillor Sewell stated that there is more rain and that a solution needs to be found. Councillor Chubb suggested that a drain map for the Grouped Parish area would be very useful, the Clerk agreed to make enquiries.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comments.

a. Report from Councillor Simon Christopher, Dorset Council

Councillor Christopher stated that flooding was very much being discussed at Dorset Council and stated that at the end of last week, an email was sent out from the Director in charge of roads urging people to report problems online as officers had been inundated with emails. Councillor Christopher stated that the Drimpton to Littlewindsor Road is inspected on a quarterly basis based on its network hierarchy, the last inspection was on the 13 November 2023 and the next inspection is due on the 20 February 2024. Councillor Chubb stated that the road had been flooded for over twenty days and an inspection next February is not going to solve the problem, stating that it should be reviewed weekly or every two weeks. Councillor Chubb stated that water is running on to private land and causing significant damage.

Councillor Christopher stated that there are considerable problems throughout West Dorset and it is for Highways to prioritise. Councillor Christopher stated that he will continue to take any issues forward which have not had a satisfactory response from Dorset Council. Councillor Sewell stated that many listed properties are having water in bow waves up their walls due to severe weather and that this needs to be looked at. Councillor Hibbard thanked Councillor Christopher for his report, Councillor Christopher wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

b. Report from Dorset Police

In his absence, the Clerk read aloud the report provided by PCSO Bishop which stated that fortunately there was nothing to report regarding the Broadwindsor Group Parish area but that he wished to highlight a recent theft of turkeys and a turkey plucking machine, from a farm near Bridport. This occurred at approximately 1.30 am on Monday 27 November. In his report, PCSO Bishop stated that he would like to advise people to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to Dorset Police on 101, or online at www.dorset.police.uk and if anyone believes that a crime is in progress, they should call 999 immediately. In his report, PCSO Bishop stated that if anyone would like any crime prevention advice, to contact him, or come and speak with him at his next engagement. Due to the Post Office changes, PCSO Bishop will be at Comrades Hall on the third Thursday of each month, at 10.00 am.

6. CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTICES

a. Greenham Resident, Speeding Vehicles Concern, Greenham Lane

The Clerk stated that this communication had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Councillor Sewell stated that she had met with the residents and that they are looking at having a traffic survey completed in the new year. Councillor Sewell stated that people do walk on the road and as you travel from Birdsmoorgate to Drimpton, there is a 30 mph zone with a single carriage way and that the white lines have been covered with mud and debris. Councillor Sewell stated that it isn't until you reach Post Office Yard that the road is wide enough for two cars to pass. Councillor Chubb stated that a survey had been carried out previously and they may be able to use that data and suggested that the residents may be interested in being part of a Speedwatch Group. The Clerk was asked to confirm to Blair Turner that the Parish Council supported the request of the resident.

7. ACCOUNTS

a. To receive the Finance Report

Councillor Hibbard referred Members of the Council to a spreadsheet highlighting income and expenditure which had previously been circulated. The current balance as of the 30 November was £47,412.03. There were no questions.

b. To note and approve the Internal Audit Report, April-September 2023

Councillors noted and approved the Internal Audit Report, April-September 2023. There were no questions.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Hibbard, seconded by Councillor Dyke and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Internal Audit Report, April-September 2023.

c. To consider for approval the Draft Discretions Policy 2023

Councillor Hibbard reported that he and Councillor Dyke had held a meeting and reviewed other policies and felt that the draft policy as circulated clearly sets out the parameters for both the Parish Council and employee and recommended it for approval.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Chubb, seconded by Councillor Dyke and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Discretions Policy 2023.

d. To approve the Budget and Precept for 2024/2025

Councillor Hibbard stated that the latest update which now included the tax base calculation had been circulated. The Clerk stated that she had amended the budget for insurance by £50.00 as she had been advised by Councillor Dyke that the premium is likely to increase by 10% each year. Councillor Hibbard stated that looking at the figures he now supported a 3% increase in the Precept request for the next financial year, which was still below inflation but allowed revenue to be sustained appropriately. Councillor Hibbard stated that it may be the case that the Parish Council may have to incur costs for remedial flooding works. Councillor Sewell stated that she supported a small incremental rise each year as unexpected things do happen and that a 3% increase is minimal. Councillor Harris stated that a 3% increase would still be less than the proposed budget and perhaps a 5% increase should be considered, Councillor Hibbard stated that the Parish Council had a healthy reserve. Councillor Dyke stated that perhaps the budget should be looked at in terms of making some savings, the Clerk stated that it was a draft and could of course be amended. Councillor Chubb stated that reserves should not be drained too much and supported a 3% increase rather than a 5%. The Clerk stated that the 3% increase would reflect an annual increase of 50p for a Band D household. It was agreed by all that a 3% increase would be requested.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Hibbard, seconded by Councillor Bassett and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Budget and Precept request of £32,659.29 for the financial year 2024-2025.

e. To appoint Fingerpost Restoration Project Tender

The Clerk reported that an invitation to tender had been published with a deadline of 1 December and stated that one expression of interest had been received from Tim Beer.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Hibbard, seconded by Councillor Sewell and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved that the fingerpost restoration project tender be appointed to Tim Beer for the 2024 to 2025 period.

f. To approve payment of £86.76 for HMRC (NI & Tax)

g. To approve payment of £37.95 for the Clerk (Expenses December 2023)

Councillor Bassett proposed that items 7f to 7g be voted for en bloc, this was agreed.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Bassett, seconded by Councillor Hibbard and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved items 7f to 7g.

8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. Applications Received and Circulated for Consultation

P/HOU/2023/04430, Hollis Hill Cottage, Hollis Hill, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QS

P/LBC/2023/04431, Hollis Hill Cottage, Hollis Hill, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QS

Councillor Dyke reported that he had attended a site meeting and stated that the proposed works are very much needed and will result in a significant improvement to the property. Councillor Dyke stated that the applicant has been in discussion with Dorset Council regarding an amendment to the dormer window and an alternative has been agreed. Councillor Dyke stated that the only point of concern raised by a neighbouring property relates to the boundary as there are no dimensions on the plan for the car parking area but the neighbouring property is happy that this will be resolved during the process and makes no formal objection. Councillor Dyke stated that he can see no reason for the Parish Council not to support this application.

b. Other Applications

P/HOU/2023/06716, 11 Bridport Road, Drimpton, DT8 3RD

Councillor Harris agreed to lead on this application and report back to the Parish Council.

c. Results

None.

d. Neighbourhood Plan Update

Councillor Hibbard stated that he had contacted Jo Witherden regarding a review and stated that a reply had been received and summarised her response. Councillor Hibbard stated that Jo has carried out a review of several plans but that not all groups have decided to go down this route, or at least not yet. Councillor Hibbard stated that the ones completed by Jo so far have included Holwell and Pimperne, and that she is nearing the end of a review for Hazelbury Bryan. The response stated that to some degree the pressure is off for groups in West Dorset whilst West Dorset can demonstrate a five year housing land supply as they are at present but stated that should this slip below five years then there is more scope for development that goes against the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Hibbard stated that Jo stated that Broadwindsor Group Parish should consider doing a review, particularly as the Plan will be five years old next October. Jo further stated that the ones she had completed were quite a 'light touch' with no new site allocations or extension to the plan period. Jo stated in her reply that it would be possible to do a similar light touch for Broadwindsor Group Parish, but this would still entail checking housing numbers against local needs and will require a six week consultation on modifications and then an examination. Councillor Hibbard stated that Jo had advised that the Grouped Parish would need a group of volunteers willing to help and that it will take the best part of a year, but monies are available to support the process. Councillor

Hibbard stated that Jo had stated that she would have some capacity to help in the new financial year.

9. PARISH COUNCIL MEETING VENUES 2024

The Clerk reported that venues for the January to April meetings needed to be confirmed. It was agreed, subject to availability, that the January and February meetings would be held at Drimpton Village Hall and the March and April meetings would be held at Blackdown Village Hall. The Clerk stated that she would contact the relevant booking clerks and confirm once booked.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

a. Working Group Update

Councillor Dyke stated that it was planned but not yet confirmed that there will be a working party at Hursey Common on Sunday 21 January to carry out a pruning and cutting back.

11. ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Nikolov reported that trees had been added to the tree nurse and it was hoped that they will eventually be transferred to Hursey Common.

12. MUGA UPDATE

Councillor Hibbard stated that the MUGA remained closed due to the moss, Councillor Raymond stated that the school was still using it but had roped off the worst affected area. The Clerk stated that she had written on behalf of the Parish Council to the school to advise that the MUGA was being closed. Councillor Hibbard stated that he had visited the MUGA and spoken with Mr. Draper. Councillor Hibbard stated that he had contacted Andy Shute for a quotation to treat and clean the surface of the MUGA and that he agreed that the drain was completely blocked and was running onto the MUGA. Councillor Hibbard stated that he proposed that the MUGA remain closed until it has been cleaned, there were no objections. Councillor Chubb stated that an email should be sent to Highways to remind them that this important community facility is closed due to their blocked drain and whether they are willing to incur the costs for cleaning the MUGA as the drain is their responsibility. The Clerk stated that she had contacted Blair Turner who had replied stating that he would go and inspect the drain but stated that this was before the recent severe weather and subsequent flooding. Councillor Chubb asked Councillor Christopher if he would intervene, he agreed, and the Clerk stated that she would forward the information to him. Councillor Hibbard stated that he had spoken to Elaine Leader and that she had asked if Councillors would consider a plaque in respect of David Leader for the MUGA, all Councillors supported this, and the Clerk was asked to make enquiries.

13. COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE GROUPED PARISH AREA

Councillor Dyke stated that he had mentioned at the last meeting about the digital switch over and reported that he had attended a webinar presented by BT. Councillor Dyke stated that BT are looking at a number of groups who they see as most potentially being impacted by the switch over – those with no mobile signal, vulnerable customers with additional needs,

elderly customers, landline only customers and those with healthcare pendants and alarms, some of which BT see as a higher priority than others. Councillor Dyke stated that BT is looking at trying to find a solution which may involve back up battery power. Councillor Dyke stated that clearly work is being done. Councillor Dyke stated that he contacted his own provider, not BT and they stated that they can do very little until Openreach informs them of their plans. Councillor Dyke stated that this is not going to be quickly resolved and that he will keep reviewing and getting updates and that it was important to make our voice heard. Councillor Sewell stated that some areas do not even have broadband. Councillor Dyke stated that the switch over is supposed to happen up until 2025 and stated that he suspects that the easier areas will be completed first, and other more difficult areas will take a lot longer and possibly be delayed.

14. WELCOME PACKS

Councillor Roberts stated that Councillor Hughes had been working on the pack contents for Broadwindsor and that it had now been finalised. The Clerk stated that there was approved money in the budget. Councillor Bassett asked about the folders, the Clerk stated that this needed discussing further outside of the meeting. Councillor Dyke asked that what people do with the folder afterwards needs considering as money should not be wasted. The Clerk stated that Councillor Harris had provided useful information about folders. Councillor Harris stated that consideration of how many packs are required and whether they are reaching everyone needs to be given. Councillor Bassett stated that in Drimpton the packs have been very well received. Councillor Harris asked whether they should be produced digitally, the Clerk stated that it was the original intention to produce in hard copy format and an online version. The Clerk stated that further discussion is needed about the folder and how the information will be updated.

15. HIGHWAYS

a. Proposed 40 mph Speed Limit on the B3163

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Dorset Council for an update and had been informed that the Police had now given their consent to the proposal and that a public consultation will take place in the new year.

b. Footpaths in the Grouped Parish Area

Councillor Dyke stated that he was concerned that in relation to footpaths, the Parish Council was being reactive and not proactive and stated that he was prepared to take on the role of Footpaths Officer. There was consensus that Councillor Dyke should be appointed. Councillor Chubb suggested that it may be worth contacting local farmers in the first instance.

c. Charging Ahead: Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Clerk stated that she had circulated this note from Dorset Council. Councillor Harris proposed Drimpton Village Hall but asked whether it required power from the Hall. Councillor Hibbard stated that he thought that a separate supply would be installed. Councillor Bassett stated that Drimpton Village Hall had no objection in principle as long as it would not increase

their electricity costs. Redlands Yard was also suggested as a possible location, the Clerk was asked to contact the owner. Councillor Hibbard stated that Dorset Council would carry out a feasibility study for any possible location. Broadwindsor school was also suggested as a possible venue and Comrades Hall. The Clerk stated that she would send information to Comrades Hall.

d. Fingerpost Restoration Programme

This item was discussed under Agenda Item 7e.

16. DEFIBRILLATOR FOR SEABOROUGH

a. New Defibrillator for Seaborough

Councillor White reported that the outcome of the application for funding had not yet been announced. Councillor Hibbard stated that he had taken the defibrillator to Blackdown Village Hall but that it was not connected yet. Councillor Raymond asked whether a sign would be helpful to alert people that there was a defibrillator. The Clerk stated that she would like to know when it has been connected so that she can update the online system.

17. MATTERS OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION

a. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Council

None.

b. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Public

None.

18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comments.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Monday 8 January 2024, venue to be confirmed.

20. CLOSE

The meeting of the Parish Council was formally closed at 8.40 pm, Councillor Hibbard thanked everyone for attending and for their participation and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.