



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
8 JANUARY 2024
DRIMPTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr. Rowland Hibbard (Chairman), Cllr. Jacqui Sewell (Vice Chair), Cllr. Rebecca Burt, Cllr. Steve Chubb, Cllr. Stephen Curtis, Cllr. Stuart Curtis, Cllr. Rick Dyke, Cllr. Andrew Frampton, Cllr. Bob Harris, Cllr. Fraser Hughes, 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 was one member of the public present. Councillor Hibbard welcomed Councillors and member of the public to the meeting and wished them a Happy New Year.

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from PCSO Bishop and from Councillor Bassett 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 11 December 2023 were confirmed as a true record, unanimously approved by the Council and duly signed by Councillor Hibbard.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comments.

a. Report from Councillor Simon Christopher, Dorset Council

Councillor Christopher stated that his report had been circulated and asked for any questions. Councillor Sewell stated that she wished to raise the issue of school routes and gritting. Councillor Christopher stated that he welcomed this question as he had been in contact with the Head of Highways to express his concern about the Marshwood Vale ward in connection to gritting and stated that as soon as a reply has been received, he will forward on. Councillor Sewell stated that The Woodroffe School had now become a priority school as the number of pupils had reached 1045. Councillor Christopher stated that the ward has some of the highest roads within the County and as such are most likely to be impacted by snow and ice. Councillor Christopher stated that he has been enquiring about the safety of bridges, barriers and rails and the local road network. Councillor Christopher stated that he had received an email from Dorset Council stating that last week, ninety operatives had been out working, Councillor Christopher stated that given the size of the County, this did not seem that many. Councillor Christopher stated that despite the unprecedented challenges faced by Highways, it was important to keep the pressure on to ensure that they do as much as they can. Councillor Raymond stated that the school bus route in Racedown and Marshwood was also not gritted and that the roads last week were treacherous, with many parents complaining. Councillor Christopher asked that an email be sent to him regarding this matter.

Councillor Chubb stated that he had raised concerns with Dorset Council last year about the lack of gritting on Axe Lane and Crewkerne Road, which was a busy school bus route. Councillor Chubb stated that he had been told that they would review this and get back to him which they did not and therefore he had to make contact to remind them. Councillor Chubb stated that he has since been informed that Dorset Council has reviewed the matter and despite the school meeting the number of children requirements, they will not be gritting the route and will review again next year. Councillor Christopher asked the Clerk if she had captured this information and thanked her for her helpful and timely minutes. Councillor Chubb stated that he was getting quite fed up with writing email after email and problems not being resolved. Councillor Christopher stated that this was a common problem across councils and that he will continue to challenge and keep the pressure on.

Councillor Dyke stated that within Councillor Christopher's report a reference to the proposed budget had been included which stated that there was a proposal for a 3% increase in Council Tax and an increase of 80% for funding for essential services. Councillor Dyke asked whether this meant that there would be budget cuts elsewhere. Councillor Christopher stated that this was not the case and that the Leader of Dorset Council has assured that and stated that there will be efficiency savings. Councillor Dyke stated that efficiency savings have been ongoing for

many years and that he struggled to see how there can be more. Councillor Christopher confirmed that Dorset Council is consolidating its operations. Councillor Dyke stated that an 80% increase on a significant sum is a massive increase. Councillor Christopher agreed and stated that Dorset Council in terms of democracy would have to be involved in the elections which would incur legal costs and with the increase in wages, this placed significant additional pressure on Dorset Council.

Councillor Sewell reminded Councillor Christopher that he had previously reported that rural areas receive 59.4% less in settlement funding than urban areas which equates to £111 per head and that residents in rural areas pay 20.6% more in Council Tax, £110 per head than their counterparts in urban areas. Councillor Sewell asked if this was still the case. Councillor Christopher stated that it is the case that Simon Hoare MP has been appointed as the Local Government Minister and that he is sure that Chris Loder MP will be challenging him on this point.

Councillor Hughes stated that the pothole at the bottom of Clan Hill had been repaired three times and was still causing a problem as had the recent flooding and asked that this be a priority. Councillor Christopher asked Councillor Hughes to forward an email with the information. Councillor Christopher suggested inviting the new Minister with responsibility for flooding, Rebecca Pow MP for Taunton, to visit the Grouped Parish.

b. Report from Dorset Police

In his absence, the Clerk read aloud the report provided by PCSO Bishop which stated that fortunately there was not much to feedback from the last month, but there were several road traffic collisions over the Christmas period. In his report, PCSO Bishop stated that he would like to take this opportunity to advise people to be careful on the road and consider planning journeys ahead of time, particularly around severe weather. The more common factors that cause collisions are often easy fixes drivers can take. Firstly, adjust your driving to the conditions. When the road and weather are clear and dry, you should allow a two second gap between you and the driver in front, this should double to four seconds, when conditions are wet, or increase to ten seconds in ice and snow. Many people fail to adjust to conditions and do not allow adequate stopping distances. Secondly, consider road positioning. Many people will often take a "racing line" around a corner, cutting over the white line. This can often put you in the way of oncoming traffic and mean taking evasive action. In lanes with no road markings, it becomes even more important to consider positioning. Finally, speed. Many people do not adjust their speed for the conditions. Simply remembering to slow adequately before a corner will allow a better reaction time, if you come across oncoming traffic, or even other road users, such as horse riders, or cyclists. Keeping a lower speed will also mean better traction when driving through larger puddles/floods, or when driving over mud/grit washed from the fields and verges.

6. CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTICES

a. Broadwindsor Resident, Gates Left Open at Hursey Field

The Clerk stated that this had been included in the supplementary papers. Councillor Hughes stated that the gate leading from the sports field into the car park needed repairing and required new posts and that the gate at the far end was blocked with trees and probably should be abandoned as any form of entry. Councillor Hughes stated that there is another gate used by dog walkers that might need a new spring to ensure that it shuts correctly, and it was agreed that all gates would be inspected. Councillor Nikolov reported that a working party for Hursey Common had been planned for 21 January and stated that the resident would be most welcome to come along and that he would be there to discuss the problems with the gates. The Clerk was asked to convey this reply to the resident. Councillor Stuart Curtis stated that he may be able to provide new posts for the larger gate. Councillor Hibbard thanked Councillor Curtis.

Councillor Hughes stated that he had made enquiries about a service for the mower and had been informed that Small Engine Services do not have a large enough vehicle to transport the mower and that when it was delivered, a vehicle had been provided by Rob Hedditch and that Small Engine Services were going to contact him. Councillor Stephen Curtis asked if a service could be carried out onsite, Councillor Hughes stated that he would ask the question.

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 31 December 2023 was £46,332.49. There were no questions. The Clerk stated that the Precept request had been submitted to Dorset Council in December.

b. To approve payment of £48.76 for HMRC (NI & Tax)

c. To approve payment of £60.00 for DM Payroll Services Ltd (Payroll)

d. To approve payment of £30.00 for Drimpton Village Hall and Recreation Trust (Hall Hire)

e. To approve payment of £60.00 for Focus (HS) Limited (Internal Audit)

f. To approve payment of £48.29 for the Clerk (Expenses December 2023 - January 2024)

g. To approve payment of £1,895.51 for the Clerk (Salary Adjustment October - December 2023)

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

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Sewell, seconded by Councillor Chubb and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved items 7b to 7g.

8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. Applications Received and Circulated for Consultation

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

Councillor Harris reported that an application for extensions and alterations to this property was approved on 28 December 2022, reference P/HOU/2022/06492 and that the applicant now wishes to reduce the scale of the extensions which the planning authority considered was a significant change to the approved scheme. Councillor Harris stated that the first-floor accommodation has been reduced from three to two bedrooms which allows the removal of the first-floor front and rear extensions approved in the previous scheme, two simple flat roof dormers are introduced on the rear elevation to light the two bedrooms and two new roof light are inserted to provide light over the stair well. On the ground floor a flat roofed single storey extension will provide extra floor space in the kitchen/dining room and a covered link to the existing garage. Councillor Harris stated that he has visited neighbours on both sides of the property again and no objections have been raised. Councillor Harris recommended that the Parish Council support this application.

P/LBC/2023/07021, 1 Church Path, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QE

Councillor Hughes reported that the need for resubmission was due to the fact that window two on the original plan was supposed to be a sash window, but it was established by the Listed Buildings Officer that this was impractical due to surrounding brickwork. Councillor Hughes stated that this window has now been amended to a casement and stated that he had not spoken to the neighbours again as when he spoke to them last time, they were supportive of the application. Councillor recommended that the Parish Council support this application.

b. Other Applications

None.

c. Results

Councillor Sewell reported that listed building consent had been given for solar panels at the Bottle Inn at Marshwood, albeit in the garden at the rear of the building. Councillor Sewell stated that this was the first ever approval by Dorset Council of solar panels in the curtilage of a listed building.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

Councillor Dyke stated that there was no other update other than the work party for Hursey Common as mentioned by Councillor Nikolov.

10. ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Nikolov reported that there was not much to report due to the recent severe weather but stated that allotment tenants have started a new project monitoring rainfall in Broadwindsor, using a gauge in their own gardens.

11. MUGA UPDATE

The Clerk stated that she had contacted Blair Turner again to reiterate that the Parish Council was very concerned about the damage that the blocked drain was having on the MUGA and that it still remained closed. The Clerk stated that she is aware of the unprecedented challenges faced by Highways due to the severe weather but that she would continue to progress this. Councillor Chubb stated that this issue needed following up now as the MUGA is such an important community asset.

The Clerk stated that she has circulated a draft visual for the dedication sign for David Leader and stated that there are many options and that this was a starting point for discussion. Councillors Hibbard and Chubb stated that they thought that the draft was very suitable. Councillor Raymond asked about the size of the photograph and whether it would upset some children on the way to school as he was extremely well liked by all pupils. Councillor Hibbard stated that he understands this point and Councillor Roberts stated that it may also serve as a positive memory for children. It was agreed to forward the draft to the family and ask for their feedback. Councillor Hibbard stated that the Clerk had suggested that the family are asked about a dedication event.

12. COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE GROUPED PARISH AREA

No update.

13. WELCOME PACKS

Councillor Roberts circulated a new draft of the welcome pack and Councillor Hughes paid thanks to Councillor Bassett for his efforts with the pack contents for Drimpton. Councillor Hughes stated that there were some additional inserts to be included in the pack. Councillor Hibbard thanked Councillors Hughes and Roberts.

14. HIGHWAYS

a. SIDs Update

The Clerk reported that there had been a good response to the call for volunteers to help with the rotation of the speed indicator devices with seven new recruits expressing an interest. The Clerk stated that she had contacted Dorset Council about training and that she was waiting for the date to be confirmed. The Clerk stated that volunteers were from both Broadwindsor and Drimpton. Councillor Harris asked whether the toolkit had been recovered, the Clerk stated that she would make enquiries.

b. Flooding

This was discussed under Agenda Item 4a.

c. Charging Ahead: Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Clerk stated that a meeting was scheduled for the next day with Dorset Council and that Councillor Sewell would be attending and that potential sites would be inspected. The Clerk stated that she had raised the matter of increases to electricity bills and that she had been informed that Dorset Council install their own supply. Councillor Chubb stated that he was

unsure how this would work at Drimpton Village Hall as they are at full capacity with the current system. Councillor Sewell stated that Dorset Council had not yet carried out feasibility studies for promised zero emission buses or calculated how much electricity may be needed to run the buses.

15. REVIEW OF BROADWINSOR GROUP PARISH EMERGENCY PLAN

The Clerk stated that the recent severe weather had prompted her to look again at the Emergency Plan for the Grouped Parish area and asked whether an update was required. Councillor Sewell agreed to review the document and report back.

16. MATTERS OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION

a. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Council

Councillor Dyke asked that the triangular piece of land opposite the war memorial and specifically the bench be added to the next agenda as he has received a proposal which could help with funding the upkeep of this area. Councillor Frampton asked that the chairman and vice chairman positions for next year be added for discussion at the next meeting. Councillor Sewell stated that debris and silt had collected again outside of the school and Councillor Raymond stated that water was constantly gushing from the drain located between the school and shop. Councillor Chubb suggested that these be reported online as progress can be tracked. The Clerk stated that at the last meeting she was asked to make enquiries about a drain map and stated that she had contacted South West Water and had been sent an electronic report but given the size of the area, it was not possible to read the detail. The Clerk stated that she had managed to have user access to the South West Water Internet Mapping (SWWIM) system which was an online map which displayed drains and sewerage systems. Councillors Chubb and Harris agreed to test the system and report back.

b. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Public

None.

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comments.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk reported that the next meeting would be convened on Monday 12 February 2024 at Drimpton Village Hall.

19. FMR TRUST

a. To receive the Finance Report

Councillor Hibbard referred Trustees to a spreadsheet highlighting income and expenditure which had previously been circulated. The current balance as of the 31 December 2023 was £3,284.21. The Clerk stated that £681.50 would also be deducted this quarter for the approved grant for the repayment of the PWLB loan for the MUGA. There were no questions.

b. To approve payment of £335.25 for Broadwindsor Group Parish Council (Trust Administration)

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Hibbard, seconded by Councillor Harris and agreed by a show of hands, Trustees unanimously approved payment 19b.

c. To consider grant payment of up to £950.00 for Village Voices (Installation of New Bench)

The Clerk reported that she had received additional information regarding this grant request and stated that community fundraising had raised £220.00 for this project (Village Voices £50.00, collection tin at the pub £20.00 to date and £150.00 minimum from the Drimpton & District Gardening Club).

Councillors Sewell and Hughes suggested supporting a third of the total costs. Councillor Chubb stated that he did not think that any other funding would be made available for the purchase of the bench and therefore proposed that a grant of £700.00 be approved. Councillor Harris proposed that a grant of £475.00 be approved. A vote was taken and the proposal of £700.00 received two votes and the proposal of £475.00 received eight votes and was subsequently approved.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Hibbard, seconded by Councillor Harris and agreed by a show of hands, Trustees approved without objection, a grant of £475.00 for Village Voices.

20. CLOSE

The meeting of the Parish Council was formally closed at 8.26 pm, the meeting of the FMR Trust was formally closed at 8.35 pm and Councillor Hibbard thanked everyone for attending and for their participation.