



## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

**8 JULY 2024**

**COMRADES HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Rick Dyke (Chairman), Cllr. Chris Beck, Cllr. Tim Beer, Cllr. Rebecca Burt, Cllr. Stephen Curtis, Cllr. Stuart Curtis, Cllr. Philip Dixon, Cllr. Andrew Frampton, Cllr. Bob Harris, Cllr. Garry Miller, Cllr. Sonia Raymond, Cllr. Nathalie Roberts, Cllr. Yvonne White.

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

The Meeting commenced at 7.45 pm and was opened by Councillor Dyke. Councillor Dyke welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting and reminded that the meeting was being audio recorded. There were fourteen members of the public present. Councillor Dyke proposed that Agenda Item 8b be moved and discussed after Agenda Item 5a. There were no objections.

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### **1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from PCSO Bishop 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 3 June 2024 were confirmed as a true record, unanimously approved by the Council and duly signed by Councillor Dyke.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

#### **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

##### **a. Report from Councillor Simon Christopher, Dorset Council**

Councillor Christopher stated that he had not circulated a written report prior to the meeting and would not do so until more activity takes place. Councillor Christopher stated that Dorset Council had seen a change of administration with the Liberal Democrats and that the first real Cabinet meeting would be taking place the following evening. Councillor Christopher stated that there had been a reduction in parking charges in coastal areas which it was envisaged would cost Dorset Council approximately £300,000. Councillor Christopher stated that it may well be that this will benefit tourists more than local people but that it is a trial, and its impact will be reviewed. Councillor Christopher stated that there has been much discussion about housing matters with the announcement of the planned rewriting of the National Planning Framework. Councillor Christopher stated that this came into force some thirteen years ago and was condensed as an attempt to make it simpler and now it is planned to make it easier for people to obtain planning permission and drive forward house building. Councillor Christopher stated that in Dorset a lot of housing has been held up due to the phosphate and nitrate issue. Councillor Christopher stated that he recommends that the Parish Council take note of a new affordable housing design guide which had just been released and stated that it was well worth consideration. Councillor Christopher stated that he is still pursuing officers and portfolio holders about pavements and improvements and had just sent an email to the Head of Highways to convey the valid concerns of a local resident about the state of local roads. Councillor Christopher asked for any questions.

Councillor Dyke made reference to the comments made by Chancellor Rachel Reeves with regard to affordable housing and stated that he welcomed further discussions with Councillor Christopher on this matter. Councillor Christopher stated that given the price of materials it is difficult for many people to contemplate building and stated that what is happening at the moment is that people are moving from London and buying properties here, often farms which carry a lower stamp duty rate than residential properties. Councillor Dixon stated that there has been a lot of talk about housing but not much discussion about local infrastructure to support development. Councillor Dixon stated that he was surprised to see in Drimpton, tankers removing sewage from the system, and he had been told by operators that this was routine practice. Councillor Christopher stated that there had been a Supreme Court case in Manchester regarding sewage spilling into the Manchester Ship Canal and that its ruling may make it easier for cases to be brought against water companies.

##### **b. Report from Dorset Police**

In his absence, the Clerk read aloud the report from PCSO Bishop which stated that on the 17 June, there was a suspicious incident involving three males. They attended an address in Drimpton and were paying attention to a vehicle. When they saw the owner, they said they were from Enterprise and were there to take the vehicle back. The owner of the vehicle told

them that this was wrong as the vehicle was hers, not hired and not registered at that address. The owner took a picture of the vehicle the males were using, and they left quickly. There has been no further incident since this. The report stated that if anyone has any similar experience, do not take them at their word and advise that you will contact the Police. Around the 18 June, there was an attack on a sheep in the Broadwindsor area. It is likely the injuries were caused by a dog. The report stated that dog owners should ensure that dogs are under control at all times, if you are going into fields, please put the dog on a lead, until you know the field is empty. The report stated that there is no reason these things need to occur if you take precautions and that advice is available from the Dog Warden, through Dorset Council. On the 20 June, Dorset Police had a report of a suspicious male between Stoke Abbott and Broadwindsor. He was seen walking away from the entrance of an isolated property, which the owners were returning to. There were windows open, which were left open by the owners, and they have checked and confirmed nothing has been stolen at this time. It is possible that he was looking for a place to spend the night.

In his report PCSO Bishop stated that if anyone is wanting to spend some time volunteering, the Community Speed Watch teams in the area are always looking for new volunteers. There are teams in Broadwindsor and Drimpton, if anyone is interested, please let him know. In his report PCSO Bishop stated that he will be at the Broadwindsor Post Office/Coffee morning on Monday 8 July, from 11.00 am and at Drimpton Village Hall, on the last Friday of each month, between 9.00 am and 10.00 am.

## **6. CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTICES**

### **a. Dorset Council, Draft Contaminated Land Strategy 2024**

The Clerk reported that this communication had previously been circulated and that the deadline for comments was 9 July. Councillor Dyke stated that for all of the questions, a yes could be provided. The Clerk stated that she would complete the questionnaire and submit.

### **b. Broadwindsor Resident, Highway Concerns**

The Clerk reported that the resident had asked for a meeting with a Councillor and the local PCSO. Councillor Frampton stated that he did not support the installation of speed bumps in this location although supported the use of them outside of schools. Councillor Raymond reported that on two occasions she had witnessed cars going up Back Lane in the wrong direction, with drivers claiming that they had not seen the sign. Councillor Raymond stated that the white lines need repainting. Councillor Dyke recalled that the matter of the white lines was one of the issues raised with Dorset Council at a meeting over a year ago and one which should have been actioned in the Summer. Councillor Dyke stated that this along with other highways matters needs to be raised again with Dorset Council, the Clerk agreed to make contact in order to progress this. Councillor Frampton stated that both road signs are visible, but it is often the case that tourists become distracted with sat nav systems. Councillor Beer stated that it is against the law to park within 10m of a road junction or opposite it, but this rule as stated in the Highway Code is not being enforced. Councillor Beer stated that if it is enforced for Trusthams, it has to be enforced for the whole of the village which will lead to

many residents unable to park in the location where they have parked for many years. Councillor Dyke stated that he will arrange a meeting with the local resident and discuss the points raised.

**c. Comrades Hall Committee, Car Park Concerns**

Councillor Dyke summarised the problem raised by the Comrades Hall Committee, notably that when it rains excess rainwater pours into the car park leaving behind significant mud and debris. The reason this happens is that the road by the entrance to the car park is raised up due to a repair in the road and the kerb stones are not stopping the water. There is a drain just to the right of the car park entrance, but the rainwater does not get to the drain. The Hall wishes to have the car park resurfaced but needs this problem to be resolved before any works can start. The Comrades Hall Committee has asked the Parish Council for help in raising this matter with Dorset Council. Councillor Dyke stated that he will add this to the other matters to be raised with the Council.

**7. ACCOUNTS**

**a. To receive the Finance Report**

Councillor Dyke referred Members of the Council to a spreadsheet highlighting income and expenditure which had previously been circulated. The current balance as of the 30 June 2024 was £40,758.51. Councillor White asked about the payment to Dorset Council of £1207.70, the Clerk stated that this was for litter bin rental and rubbish collection.

**b. To approve payment of £782.00 to T Beer (Fingerpost Restoration Costs)**

**c. To approve payment of £5.00 for Broadwindsor Allotment Group (Reimbursement of Fees)**

**d. To approve payment of £40.00 for M Simpson (Allotment Deposit Return)**

**e. To approve payment of £86.74 for HMRC (NI)**

**f. To approve payment of £16.80 for the Clerk (Expenses June 2024)**

**g. To approve payment of £1,977.90 for the Clerk (Salary Adjustment April-June 2024)**

**h. To approve payment of £31.00 for Comrades Hall (Hall Hire)**

**Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Burt, seconded by Councillor Harris and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved payments b-h.**

**i. To resolve that Jacqui Sewell and Tim Bassett be removed as signatories from the bank account held by Broadwindsor Group Parish Council**

**j. To resolve that Councillors Dyke, Harris and White be added as signatories for the bank account held by Broadwindsor Group Parish Council**

The Clerk stated that communications with TSB had been challenging and that in order to proceed as swiftly as possible with the changes to the bank account, she would not be asking for Councillors White and Harris to be added to the account at this time, only Councillor Dyke. Once these initial changes had been completed, she would then submit a request to TSB for Councillors White and Harris to be added to the account.

**Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Miller and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved Agenda Items i and j.**

## **8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **a. Applications Received and Circulated for Consultation**

P/HOU/2023/00915, The Lodge, High Street, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QP

P/LBC/2023/00916, The Lodge, High Street, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QP

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had supported the original application in March 2023 and had asked that a traffic management plan be provided for any road closure. Councillor Dyke agreed to review the revised application and report back.

### **b. Other Applications**

24/00352/FUL, Mahe Farm, Dunsham Lane, Wayford, Somerset, TA18 8QN

Councillor Dyke invited members of the public to address the Council in respect of this application. Councillor Dyke stated that the Parish Council had not been asked for its comments as a statutory consultee.

A member of the public addressed the Council and stated that there are almost two separate camps, the Wayford camp which will have to live with this monstrosity for forty years and the villages in the Vale including Broadwindsor and Drimpton which are faced with having a view of the panels for the next forty years. The member of the public stated that one household in Wayford - Townsend House will also have a view of the solar panels and stated that there has been amendment to move the panels back 30m from this house whereas there has also been an amendment to move the panels 200m away from Mahe Farmhouse. The member of the public stated that Dorset AONB is categorically against this proposal. The member of the public stated that the proposed solar farm will have a direct impact on flooding and stated that the floods in Clapton are very much contributed to by the rainfall from Wayford Hill and stated that this will only increase if the application goes ahead.

The member of the public stated that there are also considerable concerns about glint and glare which will be significant enough to impact many people and cause irritation. The member of the public stated that the site is 64 acres, of which 97% sits on a water catchment area, which supplies drinking water to the whole of Wayford which comprises thirty nine houses directly, there are nine bore holes and there is farmland and a vineyard directly beneath the site. The member of the public stated that in the event of a battery fire, which requires hundreds of thousands of litres of water to extinguish, the groundwater and therefore some, or all, of the private water supplies are likely to become heavily contaminated and unsafe to drink for the foreseeable future. The member of the public stated that he is supportive of solar power but stated that there is a time and place and that this site is unsuitable for such a development. Councillor Dyke thanked the member of the public for his comments.

The applicant, a representative of Greentech addressed the Parish Council. The applicant stated that they have been investigating the site since 2022 and have produced a large amount of reports and surveys and have tested the site with bore holes and it is their opinion that this is a good site for a solar farm. The applicant stated that beneath the panels, there is open land and grass land which absorbs water and that they have been working with a drainage engineer who has developed a solution to allow for good drainage which will keep the water onsite and in their opinion, this would create a better system than what is currently there. The applicant stated that Somerset Council is consulting with a number of experts and that they will review all comments and that there are other solutions possible if necessary. The applicant stated that there are landscaping plans and that the Council's own team will also provide support with that. The applicant stated that they are most likely going to withdraw the batteries from the application and have looked very carefully at residential impact. The applicant stated that there is a planning test which determines what is harmful and what is not and that they will ensure that there is no material harm. The applicant stated that they need to locate sites where there is a viable connection spot and that there is a spot at Oathill Farm. The applicant stated that this site however lies nearer the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty so they cannot locate the solar farm there so they have had to find a close site which is economical and has less impact. The applicant stated that they have made modifications to the design of the scheme based on community feedback.

A member of the public stated that he was a resident of Drimpton and his house overlooks the valley. The member of the public stated that although he was not going to object on the basis of losing a view - which was not legally permitted - he had asked Greentech three times to explain how glint and glare may affect him and had not received any response. The member of the public asked how he could trust the applicant who will not engage with the public. The applicant's planning consultant from Lighthouse Consulting was also in attendance and replied by stating that she would be happy to leave her contact details at the end of the meeting and would look into the questions raised. The member of public from Drimpton stated that a report had stated that there would be no glint and glare impact in Drimpton but questioned whether anyone had actually visited Drimpton. The representative from Greentech stated that he had previously worked with the consultants who carried out the glint and glare study and stated that if they found issues then they would definitely state them. The representative from Greentech stated that he had confidence with the report. The planning consultant stated that Pager Power who had produced the study was a specialist consultancy, an established company who had provided technical advice at public enquiries and that they are at the forefront of developing methodology for assessing the impact of glint and glare. Councillor Dyke asked if there were other sites which had been developed which could be comparable. The planning consultant stated that glint and glare is very specific as it looks at the geometry of where the sun is, where the receptors are and the angles of the panels, and is difficult to compare as no two sites are the same. Councillor Dyke stated that he could understand residents' concerns as this is just a statement that they have to accept or not and if the scheme goes ahead, there would be no turning back if predictions prove to

be inaccurate. Councillor Dyke stated that he understood that there was some disagreement over land quality. The member of public from Wayford stated that 52% of the land is Grade 3a and stated that the proposal to site the solar farm here goes against Government guidelines for land use.

Councillor Miller stated that with regard to glint and glare, this must vary throughout the day and year and therefore a blanket approach to assessing its impact cannot be taken. The planning consultant stated that the consultancy which produced the study used modelling software which uses geometry to work out the different impact throughout the day and through different seasons. Councillor Dixon stated that if the glint and glare impact has been calculated using a scientific basis then there must be a measure of what is deemed acceptable. Councillor Dixon asked whether this measure had been communicated to the public. The applicant from Greentech stated that this was for Pager Power to provide, Councillor Dixon responded by stating that Greentech were there as the representative of the scheme. The applicant from Greentech stated that he was not going to state anything which may not be correct. Councillor Dixon stated that Greentech should find out what the acceptable measure is and circulate the information. The planning consultant stated that this information was in the report and that following the meeting she would email the Chairman and highlight the relevant sections of the report.

A second member of the public from Wayford addressed the Council and stated that from her home she can see the glint and glare from buildings and vehicles in Littlewindsor and Seaborough at certain times of the day and stated that she supported comments from Councillors in that the impact can vary. The second member of the public from Wayford stated that Greentech seemed to quote comments from their experts when it suits them but ignore them when it's different. The second member of the public from Wayford stated that Greentech and their experts have been investigating this site since 2022 but it appears that their experts did not discover that almost the entire industrial installation sits on top of the water catchment for the village until about three weeks ago at the Extraordinary Meeting and as had been stated, thirty nine properties in the village do not have access to mains water. The second member of the public from Wayford stated that water comes from private wells and bore holes and with or without the battery storage there is risk to the water supply which could cause supplies to be abandoned for generations to come. The second member of the public from Wayford stated that although deemed temporary for forty years, that is actually two generations and stated that apart from two properties, Wayford has not had any development for over fifty years because of the lack of mains water. The second member of the public from Wayford stated that this is of serious concern, and that the site is steeper than the global recommendation for solar installations.

Councillor Frampton asked about the topography of the site and the sloping sides of the fields and stated that locally there are two other solar farms, one at Rampisham which is on top of a hill but not surrounded by any houses and therefore not overlooked and is well screened by high hedges and trees and one at Blackpool Corner, which is well hidden, although visible

from the road, there are no properties that look in on it. Councillor Frampton asked why this particular site had been chosen given the amount of people and properties who will look in on it and whether any plans had been made for screening. The applicant from Greentech stated that their landscape architects have identified where the areas of impact will be and that they have decided that this is acceptable but understands that there are differences of opinion. The applicant from Greentech stated that the location of this site is not unusual when compared to other solar farms across the country and stated that some are indeed located on flat ground but others can be on hillsides. Councillor Frampton asked whether there was a plan to plant trees, the applicant from Greentech stated that there will be some landscape planting but there already is existing landscaping at the site. The applicant from Greentech stated that he suspected that some places across the valley will still be able to see the solar farm. The applicant from Greentech stated that they believe that they have made a good choice of fields as looking at the site from the south, the fields west of Chard Lane are much bigger, and would have more of a harmful impact but stated that they have chosen not to develop these.

Councillor Christopher recalled a previous application which came before the former West Dorset District Council from Dog House Farm and stated that the planning officer must have climbed every National Trust owned hill in the Chideock area and taken photos of the likely impact that a number of yurts would have. Councillor Christopher stated that it may be the case under a Labour Government, that Dorset may have a National Park in the future which would impact the view from our local high hills.

The first member of the public from Wayford stated that the land comprises a high percentage of greensand which has no holding capacity and that the fields have twenty five to thirty years of leys with a massive root system which ultimately holds the ground together. The first member of the public from Wayford stated that soil stability has not been taken into consideration at all and that the applicant's landscape architect proposes to sow special grass mixtures under the panels and else where in the fields and then this will then be cultivated across the contours of the ground and this will be a nightmare. The first member of the public from Wayford stated that this is a major problem and is not being taken seriously enough.

A third member of the public from Wayford stated that twelve pairs of photographs were taken to provide some idea of the potential impact of the solar panels from locations including Seaborough Hill, Monarchs Way, Jubilee Trail, Pilsdon Pen and Lewesdon Hill. A fourth member of the public from Wayford asked to address the Council and stated that they live in a Grade II listed property, just 10m away from the first field being proposed for development and some years ago, they lost their water supply because the adjacent farmer dug a wildlife pond. He was not aware of the consequences, but within days and weeks, their water supply had been reduced to a level when it could not supply the household. The fourth member of the public from Wayford stated that they had a spring in their back garden and that they had to construct a new chamber and bring electricity to the house at a cost of £25,000. The fourth



member of the public from Wayford stated that as can be imagined, they are deeply concerned about the impact on the water supply.

The planning consultant from Lighthouse Consulting stated that the purpose of the swales as highlighted in the plans will be to control the rate of the surface water and stated that a development which changes the existing water flow rates would not get approval. The planning consultant stated that the swales are not designed to hold water or redirect water long term.

Councillor Beck asked how electricity will be exported from the site if the lithium battery storage element is removed from the scheme. The applicant from Greentech stated that the solar farm would still be connected by cable to the connection point and that overhead cables would be used to cross over the railway line and stream. The applicant from Greentech stated that he has asked the distribution network operator to provide a detailed response to the Council on the specific route.

Councillor Beer asked about a geological survey and stated that as far back as the 1800s the Axe Valley, from the top to the bottom was always quarried out for sand and gravel on top of the greensand because it moves. Councillor Beer asked how can the land be stable enough to support all the infrastructure required for such a scheme and stated that it does not add up. The applicant from Greentech stated it was not their role to produce a geological survey, Councillor Beer was very surprised that a survey had not yet been produced. Councillor Beck asked if the site survey contained a geological survey. The applicant from Greentech stated that tests had been carried out on the soil.

A member of the public stated that the applicant claims that the site will be able to power 6500 homes but that research from Sheffield University states that solar farms are only 11% efficient, which would mean that it could only power 715 homes. The member of the public stated that it was disingenuous to make the claim. The applicant from Greentech stated that they used a standard measurement of 24% efficiency based on average household consumption and that would produce sufficient electricity to meet these claims and stated that it is a proven technology. The planning consultant from Lighthouse Consulting stated that you take the predicted output of the site and the average household electricity usage – which is publicly available for each district across the country, and it is then a simple equation. Councillor Beck asked how long the panels could retain that output, the applicant from Greentech stated that in terms of the degradation rate, the warranties for a lot of panels are for 30 years and by the end of their lifetime they will be working on 80% of their first-year output although some private studies state a degradation rate less than that.

It was confirmed that the deadline for all comments was 19 July. Councillor Dyke thanked members of the public for their comments and stated that the application would now be discussed by members of the Parish Council. Councillor Miller stated that no provisions for the protection of the local community's drinking water have been made and that is a great concern to him. Councillor Harris stated that the panels will definitely be visible from certain

points in Drimpton and that some people take the view that as an area of outstanding natural beauty the project should not be allowed. Councillor Harris stated that the glint and glare report does not fill him with confidence and that a letter should be written to Somerset Council expressing these points. Councillor Beck stated that the application claims that forty years is temporary which is ludicrous and to be able to develop the site they will have to strip off the surface and relay the grass, put in landscaping and bearing in mind that this is greensand, it does not make any sense.

Councillor Frampton stated that he is a big fan of solar power and renewable energy but feels that the site location must be questioned. Councillor Frampton stated that there are two other solar developments locally, both of which are well screened and have minimal impact on the landscape. Councillor Frampton stated that despite being in favour of projects which generate cheap energy which is important now more than ever, he believes that this is the wrong site. Councillor White stated that she lives in Seaborough and the panels will be completely visible from there. Councillor White stated that like Councillor Frampton she is pro solar and has panels on her own home, but firmly believes that this is not the right site for such a development. Councillor White stated that the applicant had referred to the fact that there was access to the grid at Oathill Farm, Councillor White asked where the next access point is located. The applicant stated that there is no other access point available, Councillor White asked if capacity at that grid was the main driver behind the application, the applicant stated that it was.

A member of the public asked about the electricity produced and stated that the National Grid will only accept electricity at certain times, the applicant from Greentech stated that before an application is made, National Grid will make an offer of what electricity they will accept and stated that they have agreed to take all electricity produced. Councillor Beer stated that this was totally the wrong site and digging a few test pits does not tell you anything about the geology of the Axe Valley. Councillor Beer stated that he would welcome the opportunity to review the geological survey and that there are enough brown sites across the country that could utilise solar panels and that his objections were based on concerns over drainage, contamination and stability and stated that this scheme was all about making money and greed.

Councillor Dyke asked if any Councillor wished to speak in favour of the application, no Councillor asked to do so. Councillor Dyke asked members of the Council to raise their hands and vote for the Parish Council to object to the application and submit its concerns to Somerset Council. All Councillors raised their hands.

**Resolved: Agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously objected to the planning application 24/00352/FUL, Mahe Farm, Dunsham Lane, Wayford, Somerset, TA18 8QN and agreed that this objection was recorded in writing to Somerset Council.**

Councillor Dyke stated that the Parish Council has a Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group and one of its action points is to look at all commercial renewable energy

plans and to support them on a case by case basis based on their location. Councillor Dyke stated that he would like to support the application but like other Councillors feels that it is the wrong location. Councillor Dyke thanked everyone for attending and for sharing their views and stated that he felt that it had been a very helpful debate.

### **c. Results**

The following results were reported.

P/CLE/2024/02963, The Lodge, Old Sandpits House, Drimpton Road, Broadwindsor, DT8 3RS: Granted

P/PABA2/2024/01461, Manor Farm, Rookery Lane, Burstock, DT8 3LH: Prior Approval Granted

P/TRC/2024/02722, New House, West Street, Broadwindsor, DT8 3QQ: No Objection

## **9. APPOINTMENT OF LEAD COUNCILLORS**

The following Councillors/members of the public were confirmed.

- a. Multi-Use Games Area – Dominic Withington, Stefan Nikolov
- b. Defibrillators – Broadwindsor – Frankie Strawbridge, Drimpton – Martin Rowan-Robinson, Blackdown – Councillor Raymond
- c. Hursey Common, Sports Field and Green Spaces – Councillor Dyke
- d. Speed Indicator Devices – Councillor Harris
- e. Memorials – Lewesdon Hill and Broadwindsor - Councillor Frampton
- f. Young People – Councillor Burt
- g. Allotments – Sarah Hunt

## **10. FREQUENCY OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Councillor Dyke c Councillor Dyke stated that if the Council were to meet less frequently, this would present other issues, most notably around making payments and responding to planning applications. Councillor Dyke stated that this may mean that sub committees with delegated powers are formed. Councillor Dyke stated that he thought it worth debating. Councillor Frampton stated that this was an excellent idea and asked whether planning applications can be legally ratified outside of a meeting. The Clerk stated that they would have to be considered at a planning committee which could meet outside of the main meeting with fewer Councillors but stated that there would still be a requirement for an agenda to be published and minutes taken which may be counterproductive. The Clerk stated that with regard to payments, regular payments or payments known to the Council could be approved outside of a meeting and reported back at the next meeting. The Clerk stated that it was also worth considering whether meeting less frequently may increase the agenda and make meetings too long in duration. Councillor Frampton asked whether a planning committee could convene its meeting online, the Clerk stated that online meetings were no longer permitted, and the law makes no provision for them. Councillor Raymond asked whether the number of meetings could be reduced and spread over the year, perhaps every six weeks. The Clerk stated that as long as the Council meets the legal requirements of meetings to be held,

then it could arrange them in any way they wish and stated that many smaller parish councils only meet every other month. Councillor Dyke asked if any Councillor wished to continue to meet monthly, no comments were made. Councillor Beer stated that he thought that six weekly meetings would work well. The Clerk stated that she would draft a report on the different options.

## **11. REVIEW OF EMERGENCY PLAN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Dyke stated that two other areas of work ahead were the reviews of the Emergency Plan and Neighbourhood Plan and asked the Clerk if there was any difference in the urgency to complete. The Clerk stated that the Emergency Plan was out of date and the current Neighbourhood Plan could be open to challenge by developers. The Clerk stated that the review of the Neighbourhood Plan could be a considerable piece of work, and that advice from the planning consultant would be essential. Councillor Harris stated that he did not believe that the Neighbourhood Plan has been any help at all to the Parish Council and that it is the view held by many of those who gave up a great deal of their time to be part of the process. Councillor Harris stated that under the new Government, Dorset Council may be forced to build a certain number of new houses and the Local Plan may be delayed. Councillor Harris stated that he was in no hurry to review the Neighbourhood Plan and he would prefer all the planning to be removed and to call it a Parish Plan. Councillor Dyke stated that he shared these concerns and there was general consensus that the Parish Council should put this piece of work on hold. Councillor Dyke stated that he will have a look at the Emergency Plan and feedback his comments to the Council.

## **12. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY**

### **a. To review the BGPC Draft Strategy, Action Plan and Terms of Reference**

Councillor Dyke thanked those Councillors who had helped to draft the documents and stated that all three had been previously circulated and he now welcomed comments. Councillor Dyke stated that the plan is to hold a number of public meetings across the Grouped Parish area as community by-in is essential. Councillor Dyke stated that it was planned to hold the first meeting in Drimpton in September. Councillor Dyke also stated that he proposed that the working group be formally constituted as a committee of the Parish Council and that he welcomed input from everyone on what the Council should put to each of the meetings. Councillor Dyke stated that a section on landowners and farming has been included but he felt that it is a little bare and could have further comments. Councillor Dyke stated that he very much welcomed discussion and feedback from farmers on this.

### **b. Appointment of Broadwindsor Group Parish Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee**

There were no objections to the Draft Terms of Reference.

**Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Dixon, seconded by Councillor Miller and agreed by a show of hands, the Council approved the Terms of Reference and the appointment of the Broadwindsor Group Parish Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee.**

### **13. ALLOTMENTS**

The Clerk presented an update from the Broadwindsor Allotment Group as follows:

- All plots are now occupied and two of new tenants have started to clear plots previously not worked for some time.
- Visibility when leaving the site has improved by trimming the grass verge in the direction of Drimpton. In line with laws, no hedges will be touched until the autumn.
- Tenants will be asked to ensure that the gate is closed at all times once permitted vehicles have accessed the allotments. Since the last meeting, there have not been any reports of unauthorised vehicles on the allotments at school drop off/ collection time. Over the summer a sign stating no unauthorised access and no waiting on the ramp will be produced and it is hoped to have this in place by the September school term.

### **14. MUGA UPDATE**

The Clerk presented an update on the MUGA as provided by Dominic Withington:

- Occasionally the gates are not left open in the afternoons, meaning that on some days it isn't open until early evening. This will not be a problem when the school holidays commence. Ideally, one more volunteer to be a key holder would help.
- Generally, those using the MUGA leave it clean and tidy.

### **15. COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE GROUPED PARISH AREA**

Councillor Dyke stated that he had no further update at this time.

### **16. HIGHWAYS**

#### **a. Update on Speed Reduction on B3163**

The Clerk stated that as previously circulated, she was pleased to report that Dorset Council had now signed off under delegated powers the speed limit change on the B3163 and that the Traffic Regulation Order team will need some time to sort out the associated delegated powers legal work but once this has been completed signage will be arranged and a timetable for implementation provided.

#### **b. CB3 Community Bus Consultation in Drimpton**

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting she had been asked to draft a short article for the Drimpton Newsletter to seek views as to whether there was demand for the CB3 Community Bus route to be extended to the village. The Clerk reported that she had received three positive replies to date and asked whether the Council should wait a little longer before getting back to Beaminster Town Council, Councillor Harris stated that he thought that it

should as he was aware of a number of people who would support the bus service but had not yet replied to the Clerk.

A member of the public asked to address the Council, this was allowed. The member of the public stated that he welcomed the consultation as published in the Drimpton Newsletter but stated that it would have been useful to include information about the service in terms of times and fares charged. The member of the public stated that he also wanted to raise the matter of how bus services are marketed and reported that a google search for the CB3 service resulted in last year's timetable, and not being able to find up to date timetables easily will put people off from travelling. The Clerk stated that she had the same experience. The member of the public stated that the 96 Bus Service from Chard to Yeovil stops in Drimpton twice a day but that the timetable is ridiculous, stating that the bus leaves Drimpton at 9.49 am and arrives in Crewkerne at 10.05 am, with the return service at 10.11 am, giving a passenger six minutes. The member of the public stated that with regard to the afternoon service, a passenger either has 3.5 hours or 24 hours in Crewkerne. The member of the public stated that in addition the bus service does not connect well to the train service and stated that there is interest in Drimpton for buses but they must be regular. Councillor Harris stated that the bus stop used to be in Chard Road and was much more accessible than its current location in Netherhay Lane and that he had written to Somerset Council a number of years ago and that they had agreed to review the matter. Councillor Harris stated that with regard to funding, he would be more inclined to support this if the service also went to Drimpton. Councillor Dyke stated that as a Grouped Parish Council, requests which impact on any of the areas should be considered. It was agreed to wait for additional responses from the local community before feeding back to Beaminster Town Council.

Councillor Harris reported that there are two problems with the speed indicator devices (SIDs), the battery does not seem to be charging in Drimpton and the solar panel is hanging loose on the Bridport Road site and may have been hit by a vehicle. Councillor Harris stated that both matters had been reported to Dorset Council, but it may be some weeks before they are able to attend. The Clerk stated that she was not aware that damage had been incurred by a car and that they are insured.

## **17. MATTERS OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION**

### **a. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Council**

Councillor Beer reported that he had been approached by a member of the public about the poor state of local road signs, most notably in the Blackdown and Kittwhistle areas. The Clerk asked Councillor Beer if he could send her a list of the signage and its location which need repair, Councillor Beer agreed. Councillor Beck reported that the football team in Drimpton was to be rejuvenated and there had been discussions about installing an open air gym in the recreational ground. Councillor Beck asked whether the Parish Council would be able to support this in any way. The Clerk asked that a written proposal be sent to the Parish Council and that she would add it to the next agenda for discussion at the meeting in September. The

Clerk reported that she had received a request that the Parish Council mower be removed from its current location by the end of September.

**b. Items for next Agenda from Members of the Public**

A member of the public stated that she would like to raise the issue of the silencing of the Broadwindsor Church clock, due to one complaint being made. The member of the public stated that she had written to the Bishop of Sherborne and that his response was very cold and uncaring which was highly disappointing. The member of the public stated that a petition was set up which received two hundred signatures in only ten days and that this was sent to Canon Baldwin, the Bishop and the Parochial Church Council (PCC). The member of the public asked if the Parish Council could provide support to them on this matter. Councillor Dyke thanked the member of the public for raising this matter with the Council and stated that there was a need to understand the issue more and asked for previous communications to be shared. The Clerk stated that she would look into the matter further and possibly with a view to a letter being drafted.

**18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No comments.

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk reported that the next meeting would be on Monday 9 September 2024 at Drimpton Village Hall.

**20. FMR TRUST**

**a. To receive the Finance Report**

The Clerk referred Trustees to a spreadsheet highlighting income and expenditure which had previously been circulated. The current balance as of the 30 June 2024 was £3,429.95 and the Clerk stated that the share value had increased to £75,031.80.

**Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Beer, seconded by Councillor Burt and agreed by a show of hands, Trustees unanimously approved the Finance Report.**

**b. To approve payment of £382.89 for Broadwindsor Group Parish Council**

The Clerk confirmed that this was a quarterly charge made by the Parish Council for the time spent by the Clerk on FMR Trust matters. Councillor Harris asked whether this needed reviewing, the Clerk stated that it had not been reviewed during her time in post and that she agreed that it would be a good idea to look at how much time she currently spends on FMR Trust work.

**Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Beer, seconded by Councillor Burt and agreed by a show of hands, Trustees unanimously approved payment 20b.**

**c. To consider grant request of £250.00 for Drimpton Darlings Play Group**

The Clerk reported that she had asked for additional information from the applicant and confirmed that the bank account in which any grant would be paid into was the Youth Club bank account and not a personal account, the applicant would be an unpaid volunteer and that it was hoped that the Treasurer of Drimpton Village Hall would oversee all financial business. Councillor Dyke asked whether the applicant was asking for the grant now or after the group had formed. Councillor Harris stated that he had concerns about one of the planned activities which was prayer and asked whether it was appropriate for a grant to be given for such an activity when the FMR Trust was specifically for active recreational projects. Councillor Harris stated that if sufficient numbers of children do not attend, will the group close and if so, the grant will not have had any benefit to the community. Councillor Dyke asked whether the project has local support, Councillor Harris stated that he did not know and that no data had been provided with the application and he was aware that a previous group had closed. Councillor Harris stated that he did not think that the project was viable given the amount to be charged for each child. Councillor Raymond stated that the former group had closed as the children attending at that time had reached primary school age and the leader wished to retire. Councillor Raymond questioned the target age group and thought that it was unusual to include older children. Councillor Beck stated that the proposal included a home schooling element and that this may be geared towards the older children. Councillor Raymond asked whether children from the surrounding villages would be included or just families in Drimpton, what would be the maximum number of children permitted to attend and whether this was going to be a 'drop off' or parent stay group. Councillor Dyke concluded that further information was required to enable Trustees to make a decision.

## **21. CLOSE**

The meeting of the Parish Council was formally closed at 9.48 pm and the meeting of the FMR Trust formally closed at 9.58 pm. Councillor Dyke thanked everyone for attending and for their participation.