

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
Thursday 3rd October 2024 at
Maiden Newton Village Hall.**

Present:

Trena Fox (TF) (Chair)

Alan Goff (AG)

Anne Clements (AC)

Carol King (CK)

Toni C-M (TC)

Bekkie Webb (RW)

Emma Moore (EM)

In attendance: Cllr Neil Eysenck (Dorset Council), Mrs M Harding (Clerk/RFO) and 12 members of the Public

24/10-1. Welcome and opening remarks from the Chair.

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported the following:

CK and TF attended the "Dorset Council Big Conversation" in Dorchester, where it was anticipated that an update on the progress of the new council would be provided. However, attendees were instead given green and red sticky notes to vote on whether they agreed or disagreed with the current proposals. There was no formal check-in, no questions asked, and no conversation as had been promoted for the event. Both attendees left feeling disappointed and will provide this feedback to the ward councillor and Dorset Council for consideration in future engagements.

TF met with Phil Goodland, Highways Officer, and Alan to discuss the siting of the Christmas tree. This has now been agreed upon. Additionally, the wooden posts and the necessary repairs to the concrete will need to be considered by Highways.

24/10-2. To receive and approve apologies for absence Lawrie Goff, and Jeremy Edwards**24/10-3. To receive declarations of interest or grants of dispensation-** None.**24/10-4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 5^h September 2024 and sign.** These minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed AG Seconded CK All agreed.

24/10-5. To receive any matters arising from the minutes for information only-none**24/10-6. To receive a report from the Eggardon Ward Councillor for Dorset Council.****Councillor Report for Dorset Council – October 2024****Finance:**

- Ongoing financial challenges include a significant deficit from the previous council term.
- Increasing demands on adult social care are leading to unsustainable reserve spending.
- Budget briefings are underway for next year, exploring potential "invest-to-save" options, though these may take time to implement.
- Cross-council budget reviews continue to identify challenges and solutions.
- Awaiting the government's statement on council tax and other financial decisions.

Devolution:

- Dorset Council has submitted an expression of interest with neighbouring councils for the Heart of Wessex initiative, aiming to unlock more powers and resources.
- There is no current plan for mayoral devolution, and further information will be shared when available.

Planning and Housing:

- A new government is implementing mandatory housing development targets.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes will reverse late 2023 reforms, with Dorset's annual housing target rising from 1,793 to 3,230, though past targets have not been met.
- Areas with neighbourhood plans will have protection for allocated development sites.
- Dorset may struggle to meet new targets due to environmental constraints and protected landscapes.

Meeting Comments:

- **Big Conversation Feedback:** NE mentioned that feedback from the "Big Conversation" held by Dorset Council has been echoed by other parishes. This will be passed on to the "Comms team".
- **Parking Charges and Road Closures:** NE raised concerns about the parking charges and local road closures on the A356, which will last for six weeks, affecting the village. Additionally, there was discussion about Wessex Water works on Frome Lane.
- **Higher Norden Farm Shop:** NE noted that the Parish Council objected to the Higher Norden Farm Shop proposal, which has since been refused.
- **20 mph Zones:** RW inquired if the financial challenges would affect the proposed 20 mph zones. It was clarified that this would not necessarily be the case at this stage.
- **Nature Emergency Declaration:** The council is assessing issues as they arise following the nature emergency declaration, with a focus on addressing them where possible without resorting to extreme measures.
- **Second and Empty Homes:** A resident raised concerns about second homes and abandoned properties. The council now charges double council tax on second homes and encourages reporting abandoned homes for investigation.

24/10-7. Democratic Forum (15 minutes)**i. To receive a report from Enviromena on the Cruyton Solar Farm**

Mark Harding attended the meeting with his colleague Stephen Bainbridge and produced a report for Cllrs:

Following the original proposal's discussion, an appeal inquiry took place in July/August 2023, which was delayed by the Secretary of State's intervention. In April 2024, the appeal was dismissed, upholding the planning refusal. The Planning Inspector recommended overturning this refusal, but Conservative MPs ultimately did not approve the project. In response to the Inspectorate's positive feedback and recent political changes, Enviromena has developed refreshed plans and begun stakeholder engagement.

Key Improvements to the Revised Scheme:

- Revised landscaping to address previous feedback.
- Reduced number of solar modules.
- Enhanced biodiversity net gain (BNG).
- Introduction of a community benefit fund for local projects.

Next Steps:

- Key discussion points will be incorporated into the planning package.
- Further community and stakeholder engagement is planned in the coming months.

- A full planning application is expected to be submitted in December 2024

Feedback:

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may not be required, pending a discussion with the Secretary of State to confirm.

Some public support was given for reviewing the application, but others raised concerns about the use of farmland for solar development, citing the country’s reliance on food production. Steven Bainbridge addressed the concern, noting the need to tackle climate change. It was explained that the site is currently low-grade agricultural land. He also added that sheep grazing often complements solar farms.

Mark and Steven were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:39 PM.

ii. Items from members of public- none

24/10-8. Finance:

i. To consider the annual donation to the RBL Poppy Appeal

TF explained that there is a wreath that the Council reuses each year and then makes the full donation of £50.00 to the Poppy Appeal. Proposed AC, seconded by RW All agreed

ii. To confirm the date for the budget review and staff appraisal

A meeting between the Clerk, Chair, and Vice-Chair will be scheduled in October to prepare a budget for the November Parish Council meeting. Councillors are encouraged to propose projects for inclusion in the budget. It was noted that the new group council includes Frome Vauchurch, which will now contribute to the precept. This will be factored into the budget, as Frome Vauchurch historically did not pay a precept but benefitted from facilities funded by Maiden Newton residents.

iii. To consider all payments and receipts due or paid since the last meeting.

Payee	Detail	Receipt	Payment
Lloyds bank	Reserve account interest	11.66	
Lloyds Bank	32-day account interest	54.00	
Allotment rent		25.00	
Dorset Council	Precept	18000.00	
SSE	Electricity at the MUGA hut		14.08
Admin costs			1041.93
J Carver	Grass Contract		406.66
Starboard Systems	Accounting software		414.72
MN Village Hall	Hall hire Sep/Oct		38.00
DAPTC	Training		80.00

Proposed CK, seconded AC Bank balances as at 30th September 2024 £ 82,451.40

24/10-9. Council property:

i. To consider the installation of Outdoor equipment in the village

AG asked that this be looked into to be placed in the car park by the play area for the benefit of older children and adults. There is now one in Cattistock that is very popular

and cost in the region of £10,000 with grant support for 5 pieces of equipment and fencing. The Clerk will gather information on this for the Nov meeting.

ii. To report on the Old Fire House repairs

AG has inspected the Old Fire House and asked that this is deferred until LG was back so this can be considered with the tenants.

iii. To receive all inspection reports

EM had supplied a detailed play area report with actions required, these will be looked into. Allotments have been visually inspected by TF. All other assets inspected by Cllr reps.

Following a request from the Allotment Association for shared costs of a skip, councillors considered the matter. Unfortunately, the request was not supported, as the agreement with allotment holders specifies that they are responsible for removing their own rubbish from the site. Councillors felt that funds would be better allocated towards track repairs and general maintenance of the allotment site.

With regard to track repairs, councillors are actively working on a solution, which will be further discussed during the budget planning process.

24/10-10. To consider all planning applications in circulation any other planning matters.

P/NMA/2024/05274 – Amendment to P/HOU/2022/05061 (Reinstatement and conversion of store and studio): French windows moved 1m right, addition of Juliet balcony.

Location: 39 Dorchester Road, Maiden Newton Decision: No comment.

P/NMA/2024/05351 – Removal of the word "temporary" from original planning consent WD/D/15/001694 (temporary rural worker's mobile home).

Location: Crupton Manor Farm, Crupton Lane, Crupton Decision: No comment.

P/FUL/2024/04796 – Retained use of secure storage compound for telecoms equipment.

Location: Telephone Exchange, Bull Lane Decision: Objection due to street scene impact, narrow road access, noise concerns, and residential proximity.

24/10-11. To receive any Highways reports-

Councillors discussed some parking issues in the village, specifically too close to junctions this can be reported to Dorset Council parking enforcement. The links to reporting this will be provided.

AG reported on recent flooding, noting that 10 properties were affected. The flood level was recorded at 1.94m, compared to the highest record of 2.07m. He thanked residents for supporting those impacted and mentioned efforts to stop cars driving through the village during the early hours, which helped reduce distress for those affected.

A meeting has been scheduled with the Environment Agency to address these issues, and another will be arranged with Dorset Council's flood risk team. Concerns were raised about silt build-up in the Mill Stream and Hook River, which will also be discussed with the Environment Agency. Most cars were moved in time, but some were

lost, with one ending up in the river. AG highlighted the need for attention to the drainage system, which hasn't been adequately maintained.

24/10-12. To receive any Rights of way reports-

Chris Slade reported on the top pf the drift which has still not been resolved and is classed as low priority. Also, the potential for upgrading a bridleway for a BOAT on the BR12, this was claimed as a bridleway in the 1950's.

24/10-13. To consider items of correspondence received or for noting.

- The DAPTC AGM will be held on 23rd November, and AC will aim to attend.
- Friends of the Play Area Events: EM announced two upcoming fundraising events for the play area: Bingo Night: 8th February 2025 Spring Fair: 3rd May 2025 Funds raised will be shared between community groups and the play area fund.
- Development Naming: The development at the top of Webbers Piece will be named "Thompsons View."
- PPG Meeting: The PPG meeting minutes have been circulated. Items for the MNFVPC Newsletter- Flood information and meeting actions.

24/10-14. To confirm items for the next Parish Council meeting to be held on 7th November 2024.

Budget, Flood report, Fire House, PPG.

24/10-15. Democratic forum 15 minutes- members of the public to raise any other items that may form future agenda items.

Duke of Edinburgh Volunteering:

A Duke of Edinburgh student presented his plan for completing his Bronze Award by organising a three-month village litter pick, with support from other local students. They will pick litter for one hour each week. The Parish Council expressed full support and offered to provide litter pickers and advice from past litter-picking events. The student was thanked and wished well in his Duke of Edinburgh Award efforts.

Trailway Project Update:

A resident inquired about the Trailway project from Toller Porcorum. It was noted that Dorset Council is progressing with the project, and the Parish Council will keep residents informed as more information becomes available.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.20