

Maiden Newton and Frome Vauchurch Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 4th September 2025 at Maiden Newton Village Hall.

Present:

Trena Fox (TF) (Chair)

Jeremy Edwards (JE) (Vice Chair)

Anne Clements (AC)

Carol King (CK)

Bekkie Webb (RW)

Toni C-M (TCM)

Alan Goff (AG)

Jame Meatyard (JM)

Emma Moore (EM)

In attendance: Mrs M Harding (Clerk/RFO) Ward Cllr Neil Eysenck and 20 members of the Public

25/09-1. Welcome and opening remarks from the Chair.

The Chair commenced the parish council meeting with introductory housekeeping remarks and extended a welcome to all attendees. Attendees were reminded of expected conduct and informed that the public would be permitted to speak only during the designated public session unless otherwise invited by the Chair. While there was no meeting held in August, councillors undertook a review of parish assets, facilitated the installation of a new notice board (with appreciation expressed to Alan and Lawrie), and procured a grit bin for Bull Lane. Additionally, both the Chair and the Vice Chair participated in a training course regarding meeting procedures.

25/09-2. To receive and approve apologies for absence – none.

25/09-3. To receive declarations of interest or grants of dispensation-none that affected agenda items.

25/09-4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd July 2025 and sign. These minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed AG Seconded JM All agreed

25/09-5. To receive any matters arising from the minutes for information only-

The new notice board has been delivered installed the new laptop purchased in July is now in use and the asset site meeting was held in the middle of August.

The meeting was closed for the public session.

25/09-6. Democratic Forum (15 minutes) –

- Oliver Rhodes, the project manager overseeing the MUGA project, attended the meeting to provide an update on its progress to both the public and council members. He presented information regarding the company, its responsibilities in project procurement, and the client support it offers. Oliver addressed inquiries about the expected lifespan of the MUGA surface, noting it is anticipated to last 10 to 15 years with proper maintenance, while the fencing is robust enough for 10 years and comes with a three-year warranty. It was further noted that construction activities are scheduled to take approximately three to four weeks with minimal disruption to the playing field, although the Rock Pit car park will be utilised for construction vehicles. As a village resident, Oliver also shared his personal interest in the initiative before departing.
- A resident commented on the consultation for proposed housing on Chilfrome Lane and raised concerns about potential flooding issues.
- A resident inquired about the parish council's support for the local railway project; it was clarified that a resolution to support this initiative had been made at a previous meeting to improve village connectivity.
- Another resident asked why permission for one house on Chilfrome Lane had been refused, while development for 46 houses was being considered.

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- The transport representative discussed the monthly transport report, clarifying that while a parish representative provided the report, it is not solely a parish council responsibility, but the council appreciates receiving updates related to village transport.
- Councillor commented at this point about the transport plan within the local plan consultation and this being an important placed to make comments on the current transport that's available what is really needed for the village and encouraged residents to make individual comments on this consultation.

The Chair reopened the meeting following the public session.

25/09-7. Dorset Local Plan Consultation

The councillors discussed the Dorset Local Plan, highlighting the upcoming drop-in sessions for public engagement. These sessions are scheduled for 10th September in Bridport and 11th September in Dorchester. Members of the public are encouraged to attend these events to review the plan in detail.

Councillors strongly urged all residents to submit individual comments on the local plan. They clarified that any sites proposed for development within the plan have not been submitted by the parish council. Instead, such proposals are made in consultation with Dorset Council and the respective landowners, who put their sites forward for consideration. For this reason, it is vital that both residents and the parish council communicate their feedback regarding any sites in the plan with which they disagree.

The parish council will formulate its official consultation response based on the comments received from residents. To facilitate this process and ensure that all voices are heard, the council will arrange a public meeting where residents can express their views. The meeting is scheduled for 25th September at 18:30, with the aim of enabling as many residents as possible to attend and share their perspectives. The council hopes that the Ward councillor, Neil Eysenck, and potentially the Portfolio Holder for Planning, will also be present to hear community feedback. Other local councils will be invited to take part in the event, offering them the opportunity to contribute their comments as well.

The parish council reiterates that while collective feedback is important, every individual comment submitted by residents will be counted and considered during the consultation process. This will be advertised locally as soon as possible.

25/09-8. Flood Update

JE reported that flood alleviation works have begun, including the removal of silt by the “beach”. And work on the flood alleviation channel itself. Several items from the action list remain outstanding, such as following up with the EA on the hydrology report and addressing the silted alleviation channels under the bridges as noted during the asset meeting. Repairs to the non-return valve are also needed. Progress has started but further work is required; updates will be provided at the next meeting with follow ups from the ward Cllr.

25/09-9. Council property:

i. To note and review the asset site meeting report and any actions.

The report had been circulated with some actions to be carried out, EM reported that the friends of the play area group are looking to become a registered charity in order to be able to make grant applications to replace the roundabout which is now broken within the play area.

ii. To receive an update on the MUGA project and associated funding.

Final costings were received on August 27th, after which a letter of intent was agreed and to be ratified at this meeting. Project costs are £40,062 net of Vat for essential surface and fencing

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work; optional items depend on final funding. Grants have been requested from the CLT and Magna for these extras, while lighting is excluded at this stage and may be considered in the future. Support has come through the Dorset Council Small Grants fund, along with parish council reserves and CIL funds.

The project proposal was made by JE, seconded by JM, and unanimously agreed upon.

iii. To discuss a potential community project for Skips Field

It was reported that a closed meeting was convened at 6:00 PM before the parish council meeting.

This session included parish councillors and members of the CLT and was held in private due to the confidential nature of certain topics discussed. It was clarified that no decisions were made during this meeting; instead, it served as a fact-finding exercise to gather information and understand the perspectives of both parties.

Initial considerations indicated that developing the field at the top would likely be financially unviable for the parish council, but the CLT could be interested in providing housing for the village if appropriate. Consequently, it was suggested that this site be recommended for inclusion in the local plan for development by the landowner at this time.

Skips Field, which is flagged as a flood alleviation area being maintained by the EA, contains public footpaths being used by the residents as a community field and is considered unsuitable for construction. However, the parish council expressed interest in managing this field for the benefit of the village, subject to evaluating the associated costs of acquisition and ongoing maintenance.

Both parties agreed on the need to determine the value of these fields and resolved to obtain separate valuations for each, with results to be presented at the October meeting.

It was further noted that any future actions would involve holding an open meeting with the village to gather feedback from residents, as any land purchase would be funded by the parish precept. The community's input will therefore play a crucial role in the decision-making process. Proposed: JE Seconded: CK

iv. To discuss an agreement of the playing field with the Youth Football club for grant purposes.

Discussions with councillors and the youth football team committee addressed the need for maintenance of the playfield, as it is in real need of pitch maintenance. The club has previously employed an ecologist who recommend a five-year maintenance plan, as ongoing work is needed to keep the field in good condition. Currently, the club pays a small rent but, without ownership, cannot access certain funding streams. It was suggested that the club could take on a lease for the field, which would also ensure continued community access. A quote for a formal lease will be obtained for the October meeting, where future maintenance responsibilities and costs will be discussed.

This proposal was made by CK and seconded by AC.

v. To consider the current Allotment agreement and sale of surplus produce by allotment holders

- The Parish Council received a request to revise the agreement, allowing individuals any allotment holders not just members of the allotment association that wish to sell surplus produce during changing times to be able do so in the future. Councillors agreed to proceed with amending the agreement for the next year.
- It was also recorded that there are currently four vacancies on the waiting list, and one plot has been returned to the Parish Council from the allotment association. There are plans to divide this plot into smaller sections. Proposed by JE and seconded by EM.

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25/09-10. To consider all planning applications in circulation any other planning matters

P/TRC/2025/03571 Proposal:

- *P/FUL/2025/03819: Erect two agricultural buildings for housing and management of cattle Location: Manor Farm, Manor Farm Access Road. no objections.*
- *P/HOU/2025/04329: Erect single storey extension Location: Stoneleigh Crewkerne Road Higher Frome Vauchurch- no objections*
- *P/FUL/2025/00485: Construction of a temporary solar farm, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, with substations, inverters, perimeter fencing, landscaping and other associated works. Location: Land At Cruyton Farm Cruyton Lane- The PC have previously supported this application, so no objections raised.*
- *P/FUL/2025/03832: Erect detached garage with workshop and upstairs storage Location: Kingsley Orchard, Plot 21 Harvey's Close- No objections*

25/09-11. Finance:

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

Payments

Expenditure since the last meeting amounted to £9,330.12, including:

- Grounds & facilities: Grass cutting (£512.39), allotment and hall repairs (£360.00 + £216.40), plants for memorial (£66.75), grit bin (£240.60).
- Projects: MUGA project (£1,194.00), new noticeboard (£1,904.16).
- Administration & office: Admin office costs (£1,499.55 + £1,248.47), new laptop (£359.00), MNCC (£90.00).
- Insurance: Annual premium (£1,193.96).
- Utilities & banking: Electricity at MUGA (£37.70), bank charges (£8.50).
- Subscriptions & support: Allotment Society subs (£84.00), website hosting & support (£314.64).

Receipts

Income received totalled £808.96, comprising:

- Allotment rent (£50.00).
- HMRC VAT refund (£244.89).
- Bank interest across accounts (£514.07).

Proposed AC seconded TC-M. All agreed

ii. To receive the latest financial reports and bank reconciliation.

Balances

As at **31st August 2025**, cash in hand stood at **£82,634.86**, reconciled as follows:

- Current Account (Lloyds): £2,140.53
- Savings Account (Lloyds): £24,409.20
- 32 Day Notice Account (Lloyds): £56,085.13

25/09-12. To receive any Highways reports-

An email was received regarding concerns about traffic congestion on the A356, which reportedly led to a physical altercation due to road blockage. It was noted that this incident likely coincided with a fatal car accident on the A35, resulting in diverted traffic to the A356. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the portfolio holder for transport, requesting an investigation into the increasing number of accidents that have occurred in recent months.

Chair

Date

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25/09-13. To receive any Rights of way reports-

Chris Slade noted that the footpaths have been overgrown as they are not being used.

25/09-14. Eggardon Ward Councillor's Report- *To receive an update from Dorset Councillor*

Neil Eysenck on issues affecting the parish.

- NE provided feedback on the local plan, highlighting the insufficient number of events for villages impacted by development. He expressed support for the parish council's efforts in their local plan meeting and suggested sharing relevant information with other parish councils, particularly those within the Frome Valley Parish Council where specific sites have been identified. He also raised concerns regarding the absence of a five-year land supply, which increases Dorset Council's vulnerability, and emphasised the introduction of Dorset design codes within the local plan that will focus on architectural standards. Furthermore, NE commented on the Dorset Council Review Group's examination of financial audits and the engagement of external contractors to assess processes and systems.
- He mentioned ongoing discussions about reopening the railway through Toller and acknowledged the work being done by Dorset officers to facilitate this project. He stressed the importance of incorporating these developments into the transport plan, which is being consulted on concurrently with the local plan.

25/09-15. Correspondence- To consider items of correspondence received or for noting- none

25/09-16. To confirm items for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 2nd October 2025 -

Local plan, Flooding, MUGA project, Skips field and Football Club Lease.

25/09-17. Democratic forum 15 minutes- members of the public to raise any other items that may form future agenda items

- AG requested that the contractor review Harveys Green and provide recommendations regarding the presence of weeds in the grass.
- A resident inquired about the solar farm and associated footpaths. It was noted that these aspects were addressed during the revision of the plan.
- A suggestion was made regarding a potential Macmillan coffee morning, which it is hoped will be organised by village volunteers.
- JE commented on the damage to the posts around the memorial; after twice repairing the posts, and not assigning blame does the PC contact local businesses with large delivery vehicles to make them aware of the situation. We could also request assistance from Highways to provide more substantial protective measures for the area.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20:28.