

Maiden Newton and Frome Vauchurch Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2026 at Maiden Newton Village Hall.

Present:

Trena Fox (TF) (Chair)

Jeremy Edwards (JE) (Vice Chair)

Anne Clements (AC)

Georgina Stephenson (GS)

Carol King (CK)

Toni C-M (TCM)

Gareth Scott (GJS)

In attendance: Mrs M Harding (Clerk/RFO) and 8 members of the Public

26/03-1. Welcome and opening remarks from the Chair.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that it had been a busy month. This had included meetings with the Youth Football Club, dealing with repair issues at the MUGA Hut and Allotment access, and attending a meeting with the MP and the Ward Councillor regarding flood issues. The Chair advised that these matters would all be covered later on the agenda during the meeting.

26/03-2. To receive and approve apologies for absence- Cllr James Meatyard and Ward Cllr Neil Eysenck who was unwell.

26/03-3. To receive declarations of interest or grants of dispensation-None.

26/03-4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 5th February 2026 and sign. These minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed AC Seconded CK All agreed

26/03-5. Clerks Report of actions and updates

- i. Resignation of Cllr Moore registered with Dorset Council electoral services so co-option can now take place as and when convenient.
- ii. Site meeting took place with ward Cllr and MP for residents, Flood wardens and Cllrs on 27th Feb.
- iii. Fire station proposed closure- a letter prepared to be sent and the consultation to be completed.
- iv. A meeting was held with the MN Youth Football committee members to discuss the details of the lease.
- v. A contractor has repaired the fence in the play area and gates are functioning correctly.
- vi. A quote for wooden bollards at the Cross received.
- vii. MUGA works- first invoice paid, new signage is yet to be quoted for and surfacing to be completed when weather improves.
- viii. The gate of the Allotments is still locked and will be until mid-March.
- ix. The issue of sandbags on Frome Lane has been reported to the highways officer for review.
- x. Monitoring form for the Small Capital Grants Fund submitted to DC.
- xi. Litter Pick date arranged for 22nd March posters completed, and equipment ordered, routes and risk assessments provided.
- xii. MUGA lock replaced. Football club removing their equipment.

The meeting was closed for the public session.

26/03-6. Democratic Forum (15 minutes)

A resident commented on the recent meeting with the MP and Ward Councillor regarding flooding, stating that he felt the meeting had not gone well and that insufficient time had been given to

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residents' concerns. He also felt that most actions had been passed to the Ward Councillor and expressed concern that little progress would be made due to the chalk stream designation. The Chair thanked the resident for his comments.

Another resident suggested installing a public toilet at the rear of the Village Hall. Councillors noted potential costs for cleaning, maintenance, opening arrangements and vandalism. It was also noted that the church is open at certain times and could be used if required. The resident was thanked for the suggestion.

The business of the meeting was reopened

26/03-7. Eggardon Ward Councillor's Report- none

26/03-8. Maiden Newton Fire Station potential closure

The Chairman reported on an article published in the West Dorset Magazine which highlighted the issues surrounding the proposed fire service changes and the potential impact on Maiden Newton. The article emphasised the importance of the local fire service and included a compassionate example involving a resident within the village. The Chairman noted that it is important for the Parish Council to support the Fire Service and work to ensure that the proposed closure does not affect Maiden Newton.

A resident commented that the village experiences a significant increase in population during the summer months due to tourism, which could increase emergency response times if services were reduced. It was also noted that the MP has submitted an Early Day Motion to Government regarding the matter.

Residents were informed that public meetings will take place at the Village Hall on 19 March, 14 April, and 16 April to further discuss the proposals and their impact on affected communities.

The Parish Council confirmed that it will be submitting an objection to the proposed closure and encouraged residents to complete the consultation survey and attend the meetings to support the local fire service.

26/03-9. Flood Update

TF reported that on 27 February the MP, Edward Morello, and Ward Cllr Neil Eysenck visited the village to speak with residents about the devastating flooding experienced over recent months. Several parish councillors and the Flood Warden also attended.

It was noted that the time available for the meeting was limited; however, a number of questions and issues were raised by residents regarding the flooding situation.

CK reported that residents discussed historical dredging of the river which had taken place during the 1970s. It was noted that, as the river is now a protected chalk stream, dredging is no longer permitted, which may contribute to increased flood risk for riverside properties.

Concerns were also raised regarding silt build-up under bridge arches and the narrowing of the river channel due to mud and silt deposits along the riverbanks, both of which may increase flood risk to homes and businesses.

The Environment Agency has assisted in clearing obstructions; however, the MP advised that some responsibility rests with landowners as riparian owners and requested details of current land ownership where available.

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Issues were also raised regarding the spring at the allotments flowing across Drift Road and drainage connections which may contribute to sewage backing up into gardens and properties during periods of heavy rainfall. Wessex Water is responsible for the drainage system.

The MP stated he would do what he could to assist residents with the issues raised by councillors, the flood warden and residents.

It was suggested that residents be encouraged to report blocked drains through Dorset Council's "Report a Drain" system.

CK reported that she has been in correspondence with the EA advice link for "Flood Mary" and is obtaining information booklets relating to flooding. She is gathering information in preparation for producing an updated Flood Plan / Community Resilience Plan for the village, which will cover a range of potential emergency situations.

Copies of the previous Flood Plans from 2012 and 2013 have been made available, and information from these, along with current data, will be used to inform the updated plan.

It was also noted that Dorset Council and Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) are working together on developing resilience planning guidance over the coming year. It is hoped that a template will be produced to assist parish councils in preparing their own plans, which can then be shared with the community. This will be an ongoing agenda item.

26/03-10. Council property:

i. Playing field- to confirm a lease for the Playing field with the MNYFC

It was reported that a meeting had been held with representatives of the Youth Football Club on 9 February to discuss the details of a proposed lease for the field.

It was agreed that the lease arrangements would be passed to the Parish Council's solicitor to progress. The field will continue to be used in the same way as at present by the football club and the wider community, and there will be no change to the current use of the field.

The Football Club will cover the legal costs associated with preparing the lease and will pay an annual fee of £500 to the Parish Council for use of the field.

In addition, the Football Club will continue to empty the bins and keep the area tidy, as is currently the case. Personal equipment and items currently stored in the MUGA Hut will be removed and stored within the Football Club's own facilities.

The Parish Council will continue to arrange and pay for the grass cutting. Liaison will take place between the Football Club and the Parish Council regarding contractors and any ground maintenance requirements, particularly in relation to potential grant funding the club is seeking for improvements. Councillors agreed that progressing with the lease was a positive step. Proposed: TC-M Seconded: CK All agreed.

ii. MUGA and MUGA Hut- update on repairs and maintenance

TF reported that following the meeting with the Football Club it was noted that the lock on the MUGA Hut was broken. A locksmith was engaged to repair and replace the lock at a cost of £162.00.

During the visit it was also discovered that the tap inside the hut was leaking, and a plumber was asked to attend to assess and carry out repairs.

An electrician was also asked to attend to review the hardwiring of the defibrillator. This work will be undertaken free of charge for the community. However, during testing a fault was

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identified between the electricity supply and the lights at the MUGA. Further investigation is therefore required. The cost of investigating the electrical fault is £198. The Parish Council agreed to this expenditure to identify the necessary repairs.

Proposed: CK Seconded: TC-M All agreed.

iii. Play area- Inspections and repairs

Cllrs were reminded that the play area, requires weekly visual inspections, monthly reporting, the quarterly formal inspections are being carried out by an external H & S inspector.

Discussion took place on how often and how these inspections should be managed to ensure that any issues identified are addressed promptly following inspection.

It was agreed that the quarterly inspection reports will be added to the Parish Council agenda after each inspection so that any required actions can be considered and agreed.

The weekly inspections for checks will be sent to CK and JM for action.

iv. Allotments- Access and vacant plots

It was noted that the allotment gate had been locked to prevent vehicles from driving up the track during the recent period of extreme weather and very wet ground conditions.

It was agreed that the gate will remain locked until mid-March, when the area will be re-inspected to determine whether the track is suitable for vehicle access.

With regard to repairs to the track, it was agreed that quotes will be obtained to level the track and top up with new plannings. These quotes will be brought to the next meeting for consideration. Any repair works would not commence until the ground conditions have sufficiently dried.

It was also noted that there is currently one vacant allotment, however this will not be re-let until the ground conditions have improved significantly.

v. Old Fire House- Update on action and repairs

It was reported that estimates obtained last summer should be sufficient to support applications for further grant funding, initially from local sources and subsequently from the National Lottery.

It was also noted that £80 has recently been raised towards the project funds, consisting of £30 from the Christmas Window Dressing Competition (2nd prize) and £50 in donations collected at the recent Defibrillator Training event. These funds will be paid into the PC account and ring fenced for the asset. It was agreed to add this to May agenda to keep the project moving forward.

vi. Maiden Newton Clock- to consider the repairs

An initial inspection suggests the issue with the old school clock is likely with the external dials rather than the internal movement, which appears to still be running. The hands and dials will need to be removed, and the motion work taken to the workshop for repair before being returned and reassembled. The screws holding the dials may require drilling out due to corrosion. The work is expected to take approximately four days (one day dismantling, two

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days' workshop repairs, and one day reassembly). Work will be carried out from a ladder so traffic warnings will be required.

The estimated cost for the work is £800–£1,000, depending on the extent of repairs required
AC and CK offered to assist with the traffic concerns ensuring this takes place at a quieter time of day. Proposed TC-M Seconded AC All agreed

vii. Other Assets- memorials, car parks, street furniture

Bollards-A quote had been received for the replacement of two bollards in solid English oak at a cost of £800. Two additional quotes from online suppliers for recycled/rubber products were also obtained for comparison at a cost of £115 and £200. Cllrs discussed the merits of oak versus recycled materials. As the oak quote was considered higher than expected, it was agreed to seek further quotes for oak bollards and bring the matter back to the April agenda for further discussion.

Whitehorse Mews Car Park- Concerns regarding the surface condition and lighting at Whitehorse Mews car park had been raised by residents and reported to Highways. These issues are currently being investigated.

Village Hall Car Park-It was noted that the Village Hall car park, which belongs to the Parish Council, will remain closed until mid-March due to the recent weather conditions and the ground not being suitable for parking at present.

Benches- village benches will be painted again this year when the weather allows by a volunteer.

Rock Pit Car park- It was reported that the DIG group will be attending the car park on 10 March to carry out works on site. The group is also considering installing an information board, and further details will be brought back to the Council in due course.

JE reported that he had received an email requesting that the potholes in the car park be filled with gravel. The email will be forwarded to the Clerk for further consideration.

26/03-11. To consider all planning applications in circulation any other planning matters

- i. **P/TRC/2026/00928** Proposal: T1 - T14 Conifer & Shrubs – Remove Location: Whim 10 Cattistock Road- *no objections*
- ii. **P/TRC/2026/00929** Proposal: T1 Pine – Fell T2 Pine - Removal of limb pushing into wall Location: Meadowbank- 11 Cattistock Road- *no objections*
- iii. **P/HOU/2026/00940/ P/LBC/2026/00941** Proposal: Erect Two Storey Rear Extension Location: The Corn Store-Dorchester Road - *no objections*

26/03-12. Finance:

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

Councillors noted the following payments:

Wessex Retail – fuel for flood warden pump: £47.54

Dorset Locksmith – MUGA lock repair: £192.00

Lloyds Bank – bank charges: £4.67

Valda Energy – MUGA electricity: £21.87

Admin/Office costs: £1,293.96

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DAPTC – training: £10.00
Total Payments: £1,570.04
Receipts received:
Allotment rent: £15.00
Lloyds Bank interest: £71.69
Total Receipts: £86.69

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

Bank Balances (as at 28 February 2026):
Current Account (Lloyds): £4,616.54
Savings Account (Lloyds): £12,981.34
Lloyds 32-Day Notice Account: £26,382.66
Fixed Term Deposit: £30,000.00
Total Funds Held: £73,980.54
The reconciliation was noted and approved.

iii. To adopt an IT policy in line with Assertion 10 of the AGAR

Cllrs considered the requirement to adopt an IT Policy in line with AGAR Assertion 10, ensuring appropriate controls are in place for the security, storage and management of electronic data and council records.

Proposed AC Seconded GS all agreed

iv. To arrange a finance meeting to consider the year end and internal audit

A date will be circulated for this closed meeting and ratified at the next available PC meeting.

26/03-13. To receive any Highways reports- A large pothole in Frome Lane has been reported online. The streetlight at White Horse Mews has been reported to Highways; however, there are ongoing issues regarding land ownership which are being addressed. The proposed road closure at Pound Piece was queried, as the surgery is closed on Thursdays. It was suggested that, as the works are expected to take only one day, the closure could be scheduled to coincide with this day to minimise disruption.

26/03-14. To receive any Rights of way reports- RoW officer has been dealing with modification orders and ccd the PC. The PC email address will be updated with the definitive map team.

26/03-15. Correspondence- To consider items of correspondence received or for noting-
Railway Engineering Works – Councillors noted upcoming engineering works on the Heart of Wessex Line from 28 February to 8 March.

Bubbles and Squeaks' Project – Emerald Ant – Councillors considered a request for the Parish Council's support for the 'Bubbles and Squeaks' project involving Greenford School. The project will engage pupils in learning about the River Frome, including river visits with an

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ecologist and artists, environmental testing, and creative workshops. Further family arts workshops are also planned for the Village Hall in the summer.

Councillors agreed to support the project and the proposed river visits, and to be kept informed of future activities and events.

Beaver Wild Release- Cllrs received correspondence from Dorset Wildlife Trust regarding a public consultation on the potential release of wild beavers in the River Hooke and wider River Frome catchment. The Parish Council was invited to submit its views as a stakeholder and to help raise awareness of the consultation within the community.

It was agreed that the Dorset Wildlife Trust will be invited to attend the Annual Parish Assembly to present the proposal and answer any questions from residents.

26/03-16. To confirm items for the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9th April 2026.

It was noted that the meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Assembly, commencing at 6:30pm. Speakers will be invited to attend from DWT and Flood Mary also community groups will be encouraged to give short updates on their activities. Refreshments will be provided.

26/03-17. Democratic forum 15 minutes- members of the public to raise any other items that may form future agenda items

A resident commented on the recent works to the drains at Pound Piece, noting that there appears to be no pipework from the middle of the road, which may require further investigation. The Clerk will contact the Highways Officer to review the matter.

Comments were also made regarding the proposed oak bollards, noting that the quote relates to English oak, which is considered more sustainable than European oak.

A question was raised regarding the Coffee Morning, which raised £664, as noted by AC. The funds were split between Weldmare and the Ivy Club.

Residents were reminded about the upcoming litter pick, which will take place at 10:00am on 22 March, meeting at the War Memorial.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 19.54.