

Maiden Newton and Frome Vauchurch Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on

Thursday 5th May 2026 at Maiden Newton Village Hall.

Present:

Trena Fox (TF) (Chair)

Carol King (CK)

Jeremy Edwards (JE) (Vice Chair)

Toni C-M (TCM)

Anne Clements (AC)

James Meatyard (JM)

Georgina Stephenson (GS)

Gareth Scott (GJS)

In attendance: Mrs M Harding (Clerk/RFO) Ward Cllr Neil Eysenck and 6 members of the Public

26/05-1. Election of Chair for 2026-27 and sign the acceptance of office.

Cllr Trena Fox was nominated for the position of Chair of Maiden Newton & Frome Vauchurch Parish Council for the 2026–27. Proposed: Cllr JE Seconded: Cllr CK

There being no further nominations, and all councillors being in agreement, it was resolved that Cllr Trena Fox be elected as Chair for 2026–27 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chair.

Chairmans report: The Chair welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of Maiden Newton and Frome Vauchurch Parish Council.

It was noted that the Annual Meeting includes the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair for the coming year, as well as the annual business of the Parish Council. This includes agreeing meeting dates, reviewing the annual finances and Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and considering policies and procedures for the year ahead.

The Chair noted that there remains a councillor vacancy, which will be advertised again, with the aim of considering co-option at the June meeting.

The Chair reported, with sadness, that the Clerk, Michele Harding, had resigned from her position in order to manage her work-life balance and other commitments. The Council formally recorded its sincere thanks to Michele for her knowledge, commitment and support during her six years as Clerk, and wished her every success and happiness for the future.

Housekeeping arrangements, including emergency exits and toilet facilities, were noted for those present

26/05-2. Election of Vice-Chair 2026-27 and sign the acceptance of office.

Cllr Jeremy Edwards was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of Maiden Newton & Frome Vauchurch Parish Council for the 2026–27. Proposed: Cllr TF Seconded: Cllr CK

There being no further nominations, and all councillors being in agreement, it was resolved that Cllr Jeremy Edwards be elected as Vice-Chair for 2026–27 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chair.

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26/05-3. To receive and approve apologies for absence. None

26/05-4. To receive declarations of interest or grants of dispensation. None

26/05-5. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th April 2026 and sign. It was resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting, and they were duly signed by the Chair.

Proposed: AC Seconded: JM Resolved: Approved.

26/05-6. Clerks Report: The parish clock repair has been completed.

- The internal audit has been completed. Some administrative updates are required, and policies are to be reviewed. The Annual Return is included on the agenda.
- Online inspection forms have been created for councillors to use when inspecting parish assets.
- The allotment inspection has been carried out. Further discussion is included on the agenda.
- The bollards have been purchased and delivered to Highways, who will install them in due course.
- The MUGA surfacing works are scheduled to take place during the week commencing 25 May.
- Following the resignation of the Clerk, five applications have been received so far. Interviews will take place on 13 May.
- Concerns regarding the CCTV cameras have been investigated by School Transport. No further action is required.
- The consultation on the 20-mph speed limit is due to take place in the summer.
- Work on the Community Emergency Resilience Plan is commencing.
- A request for a bench has been received, and site location has been agreed by highways assuming the PC adopts the bench.

26/05-7. To receive a report from the Eggardon Ward Councillor for Dorset Council- A verbal or written update on relevant issues affecting the parish from the Dorset Council

Cllr Neil Eysenck gave a report on the Local Government Boundary Review and encouraged all councillors to respond to the consultation.

It was noted that the review appeared likely to result in significant changes based on elector numbers, which could mean some rural wards covering a much larger geographical area, requiring councillors to travel considerable distances.

It was noted that the consultation does not currently make clear what the final boundary changes may be, but councillors were encouraged to submit comments based on their views and local knowledge. Dorset Council has submitted its own suggested boundaries, although these have not yet been made public. The closing date is 1st June 2026.

Cllr Neil Eysenck also referred to the current Communities for All events, which are being held to discuss parish clustering. At a recent event, it was suggested that Maiden Newton may be clustered with North Dorset parishes. It was felt that this did not appear to make practical sense and would need further consideration.

Cllr Neil Eysenck also commented on the ongoing flooding issues. A further site meeting would be sought, and he advised that he would be speaking with the Cabinet Member for Highways and

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Flooding, to seek further clarity on flooding, community resilience support, and the recent announcement of grant funding.

Following the flooding, drop-in events are being held for residents to attend, obtain information and advice, and share their experiences. The next event was noted as being on 21 May at Sydling, with a further event on 4 June at Stratton.

A Trailway meeting would be taking place in a couple of weeks. Some sections around are progressing well, although there remains to be land ownership issues affecting the section from Toller to Maiden Newton.

26/05-8. Democratic Forum (15 minutes) *An opportunity for members of the public to ask questions, or comment on any local issues.*

A resident raised concerns regarding the ongoing flooding and river/drainage issues in the village. It was noted that the Environment Agency did not appear to be taking any immediate action and that the drainage ditch/swale may need to be significantly widened to take more water. Concerns were also raised regarding the sensitivity of the chalk stream and the volume of water coming down from Cattistock.

JE commented that part of the issue is that Skip's Field is intended to hold flood water, as this slows the flow and helps to avoid creating further problems downstream. However, it was acknowledged that the area needs to be able to accommodate more water, as water is still present. JE also noted that Environment Agency representatives had been seen on the riverbank carrying out an inspection, although they were unable to provide any update at that time.

Following the MP's comments and the last site visit, it was noted that a Community Emergency Resilience Plan was suggested to be prepared and that Wessex Water to be contacted with the support of the Ward Cllr.

JE further advised that the Chief Executive of Dorset Council had held a meeting regarding emergency strategy planning, and that Government funding of approximately £5 million had been made available for flood alleviation and gully clearance. Councillors felt it would be helpful to understand how much of this funding may be allocated to Maiden Newton.

CK commented that once the current work of the Fire Station Action Group has been completed, the group would be willing to assist with or help establish a further action group to focus on flooding issues within the village.

It was also noted by the Rights of Way Officer that the channel requires stepping stones in order to maintain access to the public right of way.

A member of the Community Speed Watch Group raised concerns that the road markings at Greenford View are now very worn, meaning drivers are not adequately recognising the speed restriction. It was noted that this had been reported to Highways, but that no action would be taken unless the markings were considered to be at least 75% worn.

26/05-9. To consider applications for the position of Clerk following the closing date of 10 May, after the resignation of the current Clerk.

There have been several strong applications received for the vacancy and that interviews would take place on 13 May 2026 by the Staffing Committee.

Resolved: The recruitment process would continue, with interviews to be held by the Staffing Committee on 13 May 2026.

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26/05-10. To confirm the roles and responsibilities of Councillors

The list of the roles and responsibilities had been circulated some adjustments were made to incorporate the two new councillors the responsibilities shared around this list will be updated and placed on the website.

26/05-11. To confirm the meeting dates for the coming year.

The Council considered the meeting dates for the 2026–27 council year.

It was confirmed that ordinary Parish Council meetings would continue to be held on the first Thursday of each month. The dates had been booked with the hall and published on the Parish Council website.

Resolved: The meeting dates for the coming year were confirmed

26/05-12. To consider and confirm that the Council meets the eligibility criteria to adopt the General Power of Competence, The Council considered whether it continued to meet the eligibility criteria to adopt the General Power of Competence.

It was noted that, in order to be eligible, at least two-thirds of the Council must be elected members, and the Clerk must hold the appropriate qualification. For Maiden Newton & Frome Vauchurch Parish Council, with 9 councillor seats, at least 6 members must be elected. Co-opted members do not count towards this requirement.

It was confirmed that only 3 elected members currently remain on the Parish Council. Although the Council is not currently eligible to use the General Power of Competence, it may still use Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 where no other specific power exists, provided that the expenditure is for the benefit of the area, or some or all of its inhabitants, and remains within the statutory limit. For 2026/27, the Section 137 limit is £11.60 per elector.

26/05-13. To reaffirm the Council's policies

The Council reviewed and considered its key policies and governance documents for the coming year; the following were reaffirmed:

- i. Standing Orders
- ii. Financial Regulations
- iii. Code of Conduct
- iv. The Council also considered the adoption of a Banking Protocol to support the Financial Regulations and provide clear procedures for banking, payments, authorisations and financial controls.
- v. It was further agreed that all other existing Council policies would be reaffirmed, subject to any future review or amendment as required.

Proposed: JE Seconded: CK

Resolved: The Council reaffirmed its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and all other existing policies. The Banking Protocol was agreed/adopted.

26/05-14. Finance and general purposes:

- i. **To receive the report from the Finance meeting and agree actions.** The Council received the report from the Finance meeting and considered the recommendations and actions arising.
- ii. **To review any budget recommendations for 2026-27.** The Council reviewed the budget position and considered any recommendations for the 2026–27 financial year.

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- Proposed GS Seconded TF
- iii. **To confirm the PC does not have conflict of interest with the external auditor BDO.** It was confirmed that the Parish Council has no conflict of interest with the appointed external auditor, BDO LLP. Proposed AC Seconded GJS
- iv. **To confirm the Notice for the period of public rights 2025-26.** The Council considered and confirmed the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the 2025–26 financial year. Proposed GS Seconded TC-M
- v. **To receive the Internal audit report 2025-26 and note any actions.** The Internal Audit Report for 2025–26 was received and noted. Any actions arising from the report were considered and will be progressed as required.
- vi. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 (Section 1).** The Council considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement 2025–26, being Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Proposed AC Seconded GS
- vii. **To approve the Accounting Statements 2025-26 (Section 2).** The Council considered and approved the Accounting Statements 2025–26, being Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Proposed JE Seconded CK
- viii. **To consider all payments and receipts due or paid since the last meeting and receive the Bank reconciliation report.** The Council also reviewed the payments and receipts due or paid since the last meeting and received the bank reconciliation report. Proposed GS Seconded T C-M

26/05-15. Council property: To receive the reports on parish assets and any actions due

- i. **To consider quotes for the Allotment Track repair.**

The Council considered quotes received for the repair of the allotment track.

Following the preparation and issue of a specification, three quotes had been obtained:

Quote 1: £4,270 plus VAT

Quote 2: £5,539 plus VAT

Quote 3: £3,670 plus VAT

The Council considered best value and the benefit to the Parish Council asset. It was agreed to accept Quote 3 at £3,670 plus VAT for the works.

A site visit will be arranged with the contractor prior to commencement, to confirm the specification and start arrangements. Proposed: CM Seconded: JE.

The Council received reports and updates relating to parish assets.

Play Area: JM reported that there was cracking to the surface underneath the swings. It was noted that the Health and Safety Inspector had advised that pea grit and sand could be placed into the cracks as a temporary measure until such time as the Parish Council is able to resurface beneath the equipment.

It was agreed that Cllrs CK and JM would obtain the necessary materials and that Cllr JM would carry out the temporary repair.

Benches: The Council considered a request from a resident's family to site a bench in the village to commemorate the resident's 90th birthday. The suggested location was next to the noticeboard in the centre of the village, near the shop, to provide a place for residents to rest when walking around the village.

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It was noted that Dorset Council Highways had been contacted and had raised no objection to the proposed location, provided the Parish Council adopted the bench and accepted responsibility for maintenance and public liability. The Council agreed in principle to adopt the bench.

It was also noted that the Council still needed to purchase a bench in memory of a previous Cllr, Councillors agreed that subject to confirmation from the family of the resident celebrating her 90th birthday, the Council would look to obtain two recycled-material benches.

MUGA: The Council discussed signage for the Multi-Use Games Area. It was noted that children had been seen using scooters and bikes within the MUGA and that this would not be permitted once the new surface is installed. A new sign is required to clearly set out the permitted use of the facility, including that scooters and bikes are not allowed. It was agreed that the surfacing company would be asked whether it could provide updated signage, and that the Parish Council would also obtain quotes for suitable signage so this can be installed as soon as possible.

It was noted that the previous sign had been removed when the old fencing was taken down. Following discussion on the MUGA signage, it was agreed that, once the works are complete, an official opening event should be arranged. Parents and children would be invited so that they can take ownership of the site and be made aware of what is and is not permitted. It was hoped that this could be arranged during June

Rock Pit Car Park: Reports had also been received of paint being splashed in the Rock Pit car park, potentially from paint stolen from another location. Councillors agreed to inspect the area and consider whether the paint could be washed down. It was also noted that the matter should be reported to the Police, or PCSO, so that it can be recorded.

A follow-up is still required regarding the DIG information board at Rock Pit Car Park.

Resolved: The asset updates were noted, temporary repairs to the swing surface would be carried out, bench arrangements would be progressed, MUGA signage quotes would be obtained, the Rock Pit car park issue would be reported, and arrangements for an official MUGA opening event would be considered.

Allotments: The Clerk and Chair carried out a full inspection of the allotments on 30 April 2026. The inspection noted a number of plots requiring further work in order to meet the terms of the allotment agreement. The report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors agreed that letters should be sent to the relevant allotment holders identified in the report, particularly as there are currently a number of vacancies and some plots are not being used or maintained as required.

26/05-16. To consider all planning applications in circulation any other planning matters.

To review and respond to planning applications received since the last meeting.

P/HOU/2026/02132 Proposal: Erection of a summerhouse Location: Meadowbank
11 Cattistock Road Maiden Newton DT2 0AG- *The Council considered the application and resolved to raise no objection.*

P/MPO/2026/02382 Proposal: Discharge of Planning obligations relating to Section 106 agreement (14th June 2011) and all its obligations: 1. a-f, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 (Planning

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application 1/D/11/000240) Location: Greenford Farm, Greenford Lane, Maiden Newton DT2 0QL- *The Council considered the application and resolved to raise no objection.*

Neil's View – Section 106 Agreement / Shared Ownership Enquiry

The Chair reported that correspondence had been received from the shared owners of a property in Neil's View regarding the possibility of staircasing to 100% ownership and a potential request to Dorset Council to vary the existing Section 106 Agreement.

It was noted that the agreement relates to the affordable housing development at Neil's View, which includes 14 affordable dwellings, with no more than two shared ownership units, and contains local connection and affordable housing provisions.

The Parish Council is not currently aware of any formal planning application or formal request to vary the Section 106 Agreement, and the view of the Community Land Trust is not yet known. Councillors noted the correspondence. No formal comment would be made unless and until a formal application or consultation is received from Dorset Council

26/05-17. To receive any Highways reports

20mph Speed Limit Consultation-It was noted that the formal consultation on the proposed 20mph speed limit is expected to take place during summer 2026.

Councillors will be updated once further details, when consultation dates are received.

Councillors commented on the option of promoting an Adopt a Drain scheme within the parish. It was noted that this could encourage residents to help keep drains and gullies clear of leaves and debris, particularly in areas known to experience surface water issues.

CK reported that the CERP group have been set up with CK, GS and GJS and have made a start on the plan.

26/05-18. To receive any Rights of way reports

The Council received information from the RoW volunteer, who had provided photographs of maps, signage and details of changes relating to a right of way which is not currently shown on the Definitive Map.

It was noted that Chris Slade had spoken with the Definitive Map Team, who had advised that the Parish Council would need to make an application for the route to be correctly recorded.

In order to progress this, the Council would need to identify the relevant landowners and gather evidence of public support for the route.

Resolved: The matter will be looked into further, land ownership will be investigated, and public support for the application will be requested.

26/05-19. To consider items of correspondence received or for noting.

To review items of correspondence received since the last meeting and decide on any actions required and to gather content for inclusion in the MNFVPC Council newsletter.

It was noted that the current councillor vacancy would be advertised with a view to co-option at the June or July Parish Council meeting.

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26/05-20. To confirm items for the next Parish Council meeting. *To agree on items or topics for the agenda of the next meeting on 4th June 2026.*

New Clerk, Co-option of a Cllr and Flooding

26/05-21. **Democratic forum 15 minutes-** members of the public to raise any other items that may form future agenda items. *(A final opportunity for the public to raise issues or suggest topics for consideration at future meetings)*

CK provided an update on the work of the Fire Station Action Group and commented on the importance of residents making their views known. It was noted that peaceful protests are being arranged and that the group continues to raise awareness and encourage community involvement.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.18pm