

NETHERBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 26th MARCH 2024 at 7.30PM

PRESENT: Cllr Robert Bowditch; Cllr Yvonne Dyke; Cllr Kevin Goodfellow; Cllr Mark Rogers; Cllr Clare Handford; Cllr Caroline Pearce and Cllr Peter Bailey.

ATTENDANCE: Jessica Teasdale (Clerk). There were several members of the public present.

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Cllr Richard King; Cllr Chris David; Cllr Anthony Alford; Cllr Donna Bentley and Cllr Bob Huxter. This was approved by the Council.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

3. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Alford had provided a report to councillors. Dorset Council Cabinet have approved a revised approach to the drafting of Dorset's Local Plan. This is in anticipation of a new plan-making system to be introduced by central government at the end of 2024. The consultation on a draft plan took place in January 2021. The council will take due regard of previous feedback from residents and stakeholders. The comments received will be used to shape the new-style plan.

Dorset Council have received extra funding, from the Department for Transport Network North fund, which will be used to address pothole repairs, resurfacing and preventative treatments to manage road conditions and maintain highway safety.

Action: Councillors to provide the Clerk with details of potholes and poor road surfaces across the parish for the Clerk to forward to Highways. Members of the public can report potholes directly to Dorset Council using the online reporting form.

Dorset Council have set a balanced 2024/25 budget of £377 million which continues to protect frontline services.

4. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO) REPORT

PSCO Alex Bishop had provided a report to councillors. The report covered ensuring that dog owners keep their dogs under control and that property boundaries are secure. There have been several thefts locally. The report also flagged being mindful when using social media, for example if posting items for sale on sites such as Facebook Marketplace, to not include personal information. A number of people have had items stolen when posting items for sale online.

5. SALWAY ASH SCHOOL REPORT

A report from the Chair of Governors had been received. A group of Year 5 and 6 children had had the opportunity to visit Downing Street and had met the Prime Minister. The school had received an Ofsted inspection and was graded *Good* overall with an *Outstanding* rating for Behaviour and Attitudes. Currently the number of children on role stands at 113. There is a trend across the country of low birth rates. There have been 10 first choices for children starting in Reception in September. This is made up of 4 children across Salway Ash, Melplash and Netherbury and 6 from outside catchment. This is below the published admission number of 15. This will see pupil numbers down to 106. The school is currently seeking a Foundation Governor to join the Governing Body.

6. SALWAY ASH VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Ryan Bennett, Chair of the committee, presented his report to councillors. Through sponsorship and donations from local businesses, replacement external windows and doors have been installed. Some remedial work to electrics has been carried out. The committee and volunteers have repaired and removed some of the equipment in the play area. The fencing that borders the playing field has been removed. Fencing to the car park has had a temporary repair pending new fencing. The committee are working on reducing outgoings as bookings have been down. A new website is being developed to allow people to make online bookings. The committee aim to improve the internal and external decoration of the hall to attract more bookings. Through volunteers and committee members carrying out the upkeep of the hall, the committee have seen a decrease in outgoings.

Bridport Youth Football Club continue to use the pitch and a formal agreement between the club and hall is now in place.

Action: The committee to provide the parish council with a year-end budget report.

7. NETHERBURY CHARITIES REPORT

Mrs Brown, Chair, had previously provided a report. The charity continues to respond to urgent appeals from local people when in times of need. The charity has spent time ensuring that the recently received legacy is invested in a secure and beneficial way to guarantee the long-term activity of the charity. This coming year, the board will be considering its role more strategically, looking at ways to support people and projects.

Action: The Clerk to ask the Chair how the charity is promoted for those seeking support and for those who may wish to donate to the charity.

8. NETHERBURY VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Cllr Bowditch, as trustee, ran through the report. New trustees and an Advisory Committee had taken over the running of the hall after the previous trustees and committee had resigned in July 2023. There has been an increase in regular bookings and fund-raising events. On the church side, the roof is leaking into the kitchen and storeroom. Work to repair the roof is due to be begin in July and will cost in the region of £25K to £30K. The trustees gave thanks to volunteers from the village which has contributed to the reduction in running costs.

Cllr Rogers, as chair and trustee to Melplash Village Hall, was asked by councillors what the position was with Melplash Village Hall. Cllr Rogers reported that a new committee has been formed and is overseeing the sale of the land that the hall sits on. The intention is for the land to be used for low-cost local housing. The funds from the sale will be held by the trustees and used in a similar way to the Netherbury Charity. It is the intention to retain the Melplash Hall Charity.

Cllr Pearce joined the meeting.

9. NETHERBURY PLAYING FIELD REPORT

Netherbury Playing Field Trustees had provided a report to councillors. As of March 2024, the account balance stands at £1,907.01 and the deposit/savings account balance is £1,045.59. Trustees were grateful for the donations and fund-raising events held and received in 2023. These included a donation of £794 from Netherbury Football Club to cover costs for grass cutting of the pitch by Dorset Council, a donation from Netherbury Garden Open Weekends during 2022 at £500 and 2023 at £150. And the Duck Race which raised £1,110.

10. CLOSE

On behalf of the parish council, Cllr. Bowditch thanked those who had provided a report for the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.