

NETHERBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 25th MARCH 2025 at 7.30PM

PRESENT: Cllr Richard King (Chair); Cllr Mark Rogers; Cllr Chris David; Cllr Luke Larder; Cllr Ryan Strong; Cllr Kevin Goodfellow and Cllr Mark Roberts.

ATTENDANCE: Jessica Teasdale (Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Cllr Robert Bowditch, Cllr Peter Bailey, Cllr Yvonne Dyke and Cllr Neil Eysenck. This was approved by the Council.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

3. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Eysenck had provided a report to councillors. Full Council have approved the 2025/26 budget at £417.2million, with substantial investment for essential frontline council services. The audit of accounts for 2022/23 and 2023/24 has been completed, with the auditor indicating a satisfactory opinion in relation to value for money for the provision of services.

Councillors discussed the footpath at the weir in Netherbury. Conversations are ongoing between Dorset Council (DC) and the owners of the Mill House. Councillors agreed to discuss the position further at the parish council meeting which followed the Annual parish Council Meeting.

Ongoing concerns were discussed about the issue with the road by Neddy's Close in Netherbury. Both the ward councillor and parish council raised concerns about a lack of communication by Dorset Council with residents around the uncertainty about when work will be completed.

Action: The Clerk to write to Highways to request DC explain their position, clarifying what should be reported to residents and road users, so that the parish council can respond to local concerns.

Cllr Eysenck had attended a recent meeting on the Brit Valley Project. Cllr King and the Clerk are due to attend an information evening in April. Councillors discussed the importance of balancing rewilding initiatives with sustainable agriculture. Councillors are grateful for Cllr Eysenck's engagement in the project.

Action: Cllr Eysenck to report back to the council on the project through ward councillor reports.

4. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO) REPORT

PCSO Alex Bishop had provided a report to councillors. The report covered recent burglaries to outbuildings in the area with tools stolen. Parishioners are encouraged to consider and review their security.

5. SALWAY ASH SCHOOL REPORT

A report from the Chair of Governors had been received. The school has successfully implemented wraparound care, along with a range of enrichment programs and extracurricular activities. The school is grateful for the donation from Netherbury Charities, which has enabled the school to install new playground equipment. Declining pupil numbers are affecting the school's budget allocation; a challenge faced by many local schools due to lower birth rates. There are currently vacancies for school governors: two foundation governors and one local authority governor. Any interested community members are encouraged to apply.

Action: The Clerk to write to the Chair to acknowledge the efforts of the school's headteacher, staff, and governors for maintaining high educational standards despite financial constraints.

Cllr Strong joined the meeting.

6. SALWAY ASH VILLAGE HALL REPORT

A website is under development to improve outreach and hall bookings. Recent issues with volunteer shortages are affecting the ability to run some community events and fundraisers. Work to the outdoor toilet and changing room is almost complete. The committee continue to carry out repairs and maintenance. The committee aim to replace the patio area and make accessible.

Action: The committee to provide quotes to the parish council for access ramps.

7. NETHERBURY CHARITIES REPORT

Mrs King, Chair, had previously provided a report. The charity continues to respond to urgent appeals from local people when in times of need. Trustees have reviewed financial investments to ensure sustainable growth. Cllr Handford, as trustee, emphasised the need for responsible financial management to ensure continued availability of funds for community projects and to assist residents in financial hardship.

8. NETHERBURY VILLAGE HALL REPORT

The roof repair has been completed successfully with a combination of grants and donations. Ongoing repairs and maintenance, including boiler servicing, have been a priority to keep the hall operational. Efforts to improve hall letting have seen positive results, leading to an increase in bookings and allows running costs to be met.

Action: The Clerk to write to trustees to thank them for their input and enthusiasm in ensuring the success of the hall.

9. NETHERBURY PLAYING FIELD REPORT

Netherbury Playing Field Trustees had provided a report to councillors. As of March 2025, the account balance stands at £2,119.80 and the deposit/savings account balance is £1,058.65. Trustees were grateful for the donations and fund-raising events held and received in 2024. These included a donation of £833.18 from Netherbury Football Club to cover costs for grass cutting of the pitch by Dorset Council.

10. CLOSE

On behalf of the parish council, Cllr. King thanked those who had provided a report for the meeting. The meeting closed at 8.00pm.