

NETHERBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 27 MAY 2025 at 7.30PM

PRESENT: Cllr. Richard King (Chair); Cllr. Mark Rogers (Vice Chair); Cllr. Robert Bowditch, Cllr. Peter Bailey, Cllr. Luke Larder; Cllr. Ryan Strong; Cllr. Kevin Goodfellow, Cllr. Yvonne Dyke, Cllr. Clare Handford, and Cllr. Mark Roberts.

ATTENDANCE: Cllr. Neil Eysenck (Dorset Council), Helen Cudmore (Acting Clerk). There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

a. Election and Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Councillor Bowditch proposed Councillor King; this was seconded by Councillor Rogers. There were no other nominations. By a show of hands, Members of the Council unanimously agreed, there were no objections or abstentions. Councillor King was elected as Chair for the 2025-2026 period of office. Councillor King duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. Councillor King proposed Councillor Rogers for the position of Vice Chair, this was seconded by Councillor Handford. By a show of hands, Members of the Council unanimously agreed, there were no objections or abstentions. Councillor Rogers was elected as Vice Chair for the 2025-2026 period of office. Councillor Rogers duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Bowditch, seconded by Councillor Rogers and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously elected Councillor King as Chair for the 2025-2026 period of office.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Handford and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously elected Councillor Rogers as Vice Chair for the 2025-2026 period of office.

2. APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY ACTING CLERK/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER DURING THE CLERK'S ABSENCE

Councillor King thanked Helen Cudmore for providing temporary support to the Parish Council at short notice.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Dyke, seconded by Councillor Bowditch and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the appointment of Helen Cudmore as the Temporary Acting Clerk and Temporary Acting Responsible Financial Officer.

3. RESOLUTION FOR TEMPORARY ACCESS TO BANKING AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS FOR TEMPORARY ACTING CLERK/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER DURING THE CLERK'S ABSENCE

Helen Cudmore stated that this resolution would ensure compliancy with the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Handford, seconded by Councillor Strong and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved access to banking and financial systems for the Temporary Acting Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

4. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris David and from PCSO Alex Bishop. This was approved by the Council.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS – TO REVIEW AND APPROVE

a. To resolve that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 as circulated to Councillors be signed as a correct record.

The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 were confirmed as a true record, unanimously approved by the Council and duly signed by Councillor King.

b. To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 as circulated to Councillors be signed as a correct record.

Councillor Handford stated that she had been present at the meeting and that her attendance should have been recorded. Councillor Dyke stated that her apologies should have been recorded. The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25 March 2025 were then confirmed as a true record, unanimously approved by the Council and duly signed by Councillor King.

7. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LIST UPDATE

Camesworth Lane

Councillor Bailey reported that he and Councillor David had attended a meeting with Dorset Council's new Highways Officer Stuart Smith who confirmed that this resurfacing is on Dorset Council's works list, but could not confirm a commencement date. Councillor Eysenck reported that he had raised a series of pothole reports for this location.

Relocation of Bench

Councillor Bowditch stated that he will remove the existing bench, Councillor King offered to help. Councillor Roberts agreed to forward contact details for the Harbour Master's Office to the Acting Clerk to obtain a quotation for a new bench.

Tower Hill Collapsed Road Edge

No satisfactory response has been forthcoming from Dorset Council, Councillor King proposed that a letter be sent to Edward Morello MP, all Councillors agreed. The Acting Clerk to draft and copy in Councillor Eysenck. Councillor Eysenck reported that he had also raised this matter with Dorset Council at senior level and stated that as he was unable to get an answer, he would be taking this to the MP as well.

Footpath, The Weir, Netherbury

Councillor King reported that he had attended a site meeting on 7 May, along with representatives from the Environment Agency, Dorset Council, the Estate Manager for the Mill House, and Councillor Eysenck. No agreement was reached regarding responsibility for the repair of the footpath. It was noted that the owner of the Mill House is expected to be in residence in June, and it was agreed that a meeting should be arranged between the property owner, Councillor King, and Councillor Eysenck. Safety concerns were raised regarding the lack of appropriate signage indicating the path closure. Councillor Eysenck explained that although a sign had been erected temporarily, it was subsequently removed due to concerns that it could expose Dorset Council to legal liability in the event of an accident. The flash flooding in February and the resulting high water levels at the site highlighted its vulnerability, and it was questioned whether any temporary repairs would be effective or worthwhile.

SID Rotation

Councillor Bailey agreed to progress a quotation from the Lengthsman.

Enforcement

Councillor Eysenck reported that two additional staff members had been recruited to the Enforcement Team. He expressed optimism that, following an initial settling-in period, this would lead to improved progress.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

9. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT, COUNCILLOR NEIL EYSENCK

Recruitment of new Chief Executive

Matt Prosser left Dorset Council at the end of February, Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health and a member of the senior leadership team has been Acting Chief Executive. Dr Catherine Howe was approved as the new Chief Executive at Full Council; a start date is yet to be confirmed but is likely to be the beginning of August. Dr Howe is currently Chief Executive of Worthing and Adur Council. Her key personal interest areas include digital democracy and social change. She is also currently Chair of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

Annual Meeting of Dorset Council 15 May

All portfolio holders will be remaining in their same positions for the coming year. Stella Jones, Nick Ireland and Les Fry all re-elected for the coming year. Some minor committee changes. Councillor Eysenck has stepped away from the Place and Resources Scrutiny but intends to attend as many of the committee meetings as possible as a non-committee member. Dorset Councillors voted in favour of a rise in their annual allowances which was recommended by the independent remuneration panel. Councillors were asked to support the increase, albeit a number of Councillors are expected to not accept.

Dorset Council Budget and Audit

Work on the transformation of wider council processes through Our Future Council (OFC) under the direction of Councillor Ben Wilson continues. The audit of Financials from 22/23 and 23/24 now completed – investigations into significant weakness highlighted by auditors.

A report has just been issued by Internal Audit and is currently being considered by the senior leadership team and members of the Audit and Governance Committee. Due to the nature of the issues identified there is likely to be coverage in the press in coming weeks.

New Local Plan

Work has commenced on a new Local Plan, to replace the previous West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2011-2031 which Planning are currently using but is coming close to the end of its useful life. Parish Councils have recently been invited to attend preliminary meetings about how they will be able to be involved in this process.

Brit Valley Project – Dorset Wilding

The Parish Council was asked for feedback about levels of engagement in this project, Councillor Eysenk expressed his interest to be involved given its focus on flooding and its collaborative approach with farmers and landowners. The Chair and Clerk had attended a meeting with Sam Rose, Director and as local farmers seem to be engaged, Councillor King suggested that the Parish Council should be involved. It was agreed that the project is in its infancy and it would be premature to arrange a meeting. Councillor Eysenk agreed to continue to engage and report back as and when to the Parish Council.

10. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER REPORT

The Acting Clerk stated that this report had been circulated and included a review of the last year. In summary:

- Small number of scam reports recently, particularly investment frauds from advertisements on Facebook.
- Towards the end of last year and the beginning of this, a couple of non-dwelling burglaries, such as sheds and garages, notably in the Netherbury and Marshwood areas. This appears to have subsided a little of late.
- Recent crime in the area of Thorncombe, a quad, trailer and Land Rover were stolen.
- The local Neighbourhood Police Team have reduced from five to four, likely to mean that during times of higher demand it may take longer to respond.
- Local engagements, Comrades Hall in Broadwindsor every four weeks on a Monday, Drimpton Village Hall on the last Friday of every month.

Councillor King reported that a parishioner had found a used needle by a gate in Netherbury Church ground and had safely removed it and that there had been a report of a break in at the Church, thought by Dorset Police to be drug related. Councillor King stated that he would report the used syringe to PCSO Bishop.

11. CORRESPONDANCE

a. Bridport Citizens Advice, Grant Request

It was agreed that the Parish Council would provide a grant for the same amount as approved the year before.

b. Salway Ash Resident, Speeding Traffic Concerns

The Acting Clerk stated that this correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members of the Parish Council suggested that the resident may be interested in setting up a Speedwatch Group in Salway Ash, the Acting Clerk was asked to reply accordingly and signpost to Dorset Police and the Speedwatch Team in Melplash for advice and guidance.

12. TO AGREE COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIONS

a. To appoint Council representative for Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP)

A vote was taken, Councillors agreed not to continue with membership of BLAP.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Bowditch, seconded by Councillor Dyke and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously agreed not to continue with membership of the Bridport Local Area Partnership.

b. To appoint Council representative for Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC)

It was agreed that Councillor King be the named representative for the DAPTC Western Area Group, with attendance rotated across the Council based on the agenda.

13. TO APPROVE THE DATES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2025/26

The Acting Clerk reported the following meeting dates: 22 July, 23 September, 25 November, 27 January, 24 March and 26 May. The Acting Clerk to book the Reading Room in Netherbury.

14. DOCUMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

Councillor King reported that the Parish Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and associated policies had recently been updated, there were no requests for amendments.

15. ACCOUNTS

a. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report (internal audit letter and reconciliation)

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Handford and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Annual Internal Audit Report, internal audit letter and reconciliation for 2024/2025.

2. To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Roberts, seconded by Councillor Handford and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.

3. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2024/25

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Handford and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Accounting Statements for 2024/25.

4. To consider and approve the Certificate of Exemption 2024/25

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Bailey, seconded by Councillor Rogers and agreed by a

show of hands, the Council unanimously approved the Certificate of Exemption for 2024/25.

5. To note commencement date for Exercise of Public Rights, 9 June – 18 July

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Strong, seconded by Councillor Dyke and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved 9 June to 18 July as the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights.

b. To approve payment of £31.20 for CB Reid (Payroll and Pension)

c. To approve payment of £425.40 for Community First Trading Limited (Insurance)

d. To approve payment of £80.00 for Focus Ltd (Internal Audit)

e. To approve payment of £322.92 for Dorset Council (Litter bin rental and collection)

f. To approve payment of £449.26 for Vision ICT Limited (Website hosting and support)

g. To approve payment of £36.00 for CB Reid (Payroll)

Agenda Items 15b – 15g were approved en bloc. Item 15h was removed.

Resolved: Proposed by Councillor Dyke, seconded by Councillor Bowditch and agreed by a show of hands, the Council unanimously approved payments 15b-15g.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. Applications received and circulated for consultation

P/LBC/2025/01699, Cedar Cottage, Crooked Oak Hill, Melplash, DT6 3UH

Councillor Rogers reported that he had reviewed the application which was seeking listed building consent to repoint the west wall of the property. No concerns were raised.

b. Other Applications

P/PABA/2025/02767, Filford Farm, Filford Farm to Pomice Farm, Filford, DT6 5JW

P/PABA/2025/02489, Land South of Hingsdon Lane, Netherbury

P/PABA/2025/02971, Land off Drury Lane, Netherbury

The above applications were noted for information purposes; no concerns were raised.

17. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Deferred until the return of the Clerk.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Acting Clerk reported that the next meeting would be at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 22 July at The Reading Room, Netherbury.

19. CLOSE

The meeting of the Parish Council was formally closed at 8.40 pm, Councillor King thanked everyone for attending and for their participation.