**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEETING OF SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT**

**7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 6th MARCH 2025 AT THE PORTMAN HALL SHILLINGSTONE**

**PRESENT: R McNamara (Chairman) (RM)**, M Barlow (MB), R Harwood (RH), R Leadbeater (RL), M Pomeroy (MP), I Suter (IS), Unitary Cllr S Murcer, Footpaths Officer G Rains, the Clerk D Green. In addition, there were 2 members of the public present.

**1219. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Ridout

**1220. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None.

**1221. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 6th February 2025 were approved.

**1222. MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman provided an update in relation to the Young People project. There has not been any response from any of the Schools or Dorset Council concerning this initiative and it will not be taken any further at the present time.

**1223. PUBLIC SESSION**

Lesley Gasson (LG) referred to a number of issues:

**Village Children** - involvement in Village activities is to be welcomed. The School has agreed to create a ‘Peter Rabbit Garden’ table for the Flower Festival in June. There is a new ‘Rood Group’ for 8–11-year-olds who meet at the Church Centre on Fridays for games, crafts and stories. The School plans to make use of the new bee-keeping centre when this is operational

**Bee-keeping resource centre, Holloway Farm –** break clauses have now been removed from the lease for Holloway Farm and this will enable the £30k National Lottery to be received.

**1224. UNITARY COUNCILLOR REPORT** –

Cllr Murcer provided these updates:

* At the full council meeting the 2025/6 budget of £417m passed Dorset Council.  This marks a £39 million increase in spending from last year, injecting much needed funding into essential services for residents, especially vulnerable children and adults. Additional funding includes:
* £14.5 million for adult social care and housing services
* £1.5 million for children’s services, and
* £4 million for Place services including transport, highways and planning services.
* Dorset Council is making a number of redundancies in an attempt to protect ‘back office’ roles by merging directorates.
* An amendment was proposed diverting the second homes levy in to cost of living support, housing and cancelling the new evening and night time car parking charges e.g. £2.50 after 6.00pm or £50 annual parking permit. This amendment was defeated but the administration announced a pause on the parking proposal and have commissioned a review of parking charges.  The impact of the proposed measure on the night-time economy was a major concern.
* Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils did register their interest in being in the first round of councils to consider mergers. However, they were not selected by central government as a priority case.
* The opening of the new Family Hub for North Dorset took place on the 27 February 2025; this is located on the Butts Pond Industrial Estate in Sturminster. The Vale Pantry shop in the centre of Sturminster is also relocating. The Vale Hub is a one stop shop to get support for children, young people and families. It will also include a children’s play area and large kitchen and restaurant.

The Chairman, together with Cllr Pomeroy, had attended a Future Planning Event. It is a concern that it is apparent that Dorset Council is working towards what are unachievable new housing targets and that considerable resources were been spent in this process. The Chairman also mentioned the concern that the Parish Council is working towards refreshing the Neighbourhood Plan, which may in fact be ignored by Dorset Council when planning decisions are being taken.

Cllr Murcer noted that around 82-84 % of the Dorset area is in the AONB ( Natural Landscape) and this is proving to be difficult for developers.

**1225. FOOTPATHS OFFICER REPORT**

Grahams Rains updated the Council concerning several issues:

* FP33 – Lanchards Lane bridge – still awaiting DC contractor repairs
* North Dorset’s Head Ranger Graham Stanley is now also responsible for the Purbeck area

Cllr White raised an issue concerning clearance work near Shillingstone Hill, behind White Pit, which appears to have decimated trees and has left substantive debris on the roads. Graham Rains will look into this.

**1226. V.E DAY & V.J DAY COMMEMORATION, PC SUMMER EVENT**

It was noted that the W.I. appear to holding an event in May. The Parish Council agreed that a ‘Best Bunting’ competition, with a prize, to be judged by an ex-military resident could be promoted for V.E DAY 80.

A working group will consider possible arrangements for a ‘Summer Event’.

**1227. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

**Roads/Drains/Flooding** –

* Cllrs McNamara, Pomeroy and Suter held a meeting with the Environment Agency and Dorset Councils Flooding Team.
* Various issues concerning watercourses in the vicinity of Hine Town Lane were identified including incorrect mapping records. Cllr Pomeroy is now working on a definitive map of water flow issues, which will inform planning decisions and to enable flood countermeasures to be taken.
* It was evident from the meeting that some ditches require re-cutting and clearing and additional pipework is also necessary.It is also apparent that the road is being eroded by run off not being properly dealt with.
* Consideration will be given to creating a Sustainable Drainage System, possibly involving the creation of a pond in the corner of the Recreation Ground; this would though involve the relocation of some play equipment (MP).
* The Chairman proposed that it would be a good idea to promote water conservation by use of water butts, for example, to alleviate some of the issues around the village.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Pomeroy for his considerable work in all respects.

**Portman Hall –**

* has received a ‘Level 3’ facilities award under the Village Hall’s Award scheme, which has resulted in a reduction of insurance premiums.
* The profit from invested funds has paid for the £ 3,000 roof repair and the refurbishment of the car-park.
* A new electrical cable has improved lighting around the building
* New signage for those travelling to the Hall from the Blandford direction is planned
* Bike racks will be installed
* A new kitchen is planned following receipt of a grant from the Cheese Festival.
* The Newcomers Party will be held on 18th October 2025. (RH)

**Youth Club** – has benefitted from the proceeds of a meat draw to the sum of £414 (IS)

**1228. OTHER PLANNING ISSUES**

**New applications - P/NOTP/2025/00852 - Telephone Kiosk The Cross Shillingstone - Remove payphone (Call box I.D. 01258860246).**

It was noted that of the list of 7 local boxes listed for removal this has the highest usage of all, some 17 calls in the previous year, this demonstrated a demand and possible public safety necessity for the box to be retained. An OBJECTION to this application has been lodged.

**Land at The Old Ox application –** It was noted that this application has now been approved.The lengthy delegated officers reports clearly explained the rationale of the decision made, in the light of the previous appeal, and changes to the scheme that were proposed.

The Parish Council expressed concerned regarding the process whereby it had been decided that a delegated decision would be made by a Dorset Council officer and the application not referred to the Planning Committee, as had been requested. The PC agreed to make a Freedom of Information request relating to this issue.

**Neighbourhood Plan update** – this will be reviewed by the PC in April before publication. Unspent funds concerning the allocated grant have to be returned, if necessary, in early April. The Clerk has requested clarification of what funding will be available for 2025/2026.

**1229. FINANCES**

**i) Retrospective Payments approval:** the following payments were **APPROVED**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Payee Name** | **£ Total** | **Reason** |
| 03/02/2025 | Shillingstone Cricket Club | £ 416.66 | Mowing |
| 06/02/2025 | Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd | £ 1,401.36 | Neighbourhood Plan Fee |
| 11/02/2025 | David Green | £ 52.98 | Jan 2025 expenses |
| 17/02/2025 | Dorset Council | £ 210.00 | SID deployment - part year |
| 17/02/2025 | Fireline Ltd | £ 438.00 | Change fire alarm panel |
| 17/02/2025 | Edens Landscapes Limited | £ 252.00 | Mowing/strimming |
| 24/02/2025 | Elizabeth Brecknock | £ 160.00 | Cleaning |
| 26/02/2025 | Parish Online | £ 60.00 | Mapping system |
| 28/02/2025 | David Green | £ 837.45 | February 2025 pay |

**ii) New payments approval -** Clerk’s expenses £ 42.00 were approved.

**1230. PAVILION/ PLAY AREAS REPORT**

Pavilion - the Clerk reported that:

* the mower shed roof has been repaired
* the Fire alarm control panel has been replaced with a keypad system
* the Pod intruder alarm has been removed

Play area inspection charge increases have been agreed with the contractor.

The Cricket Club and Parish Council are discussing a new 3-year mowing contract.

There has been a dumping of manure & straw by persons unknown at the allotments; efforts have been made to have this removed, without success thus far.

**1231. CORRESPONDENCE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **FROM** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 12/02/2025 | Dorset Highways | TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE A357, STURMINSTER NEWTON |
| 20/02/2025 | Dorset CPRE | Invitation to North Dorset CPRE AGM and Talk by Kate Adie |
| 25/02/2025 | Dorset Highways | TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE WHITE PIT, SHILLINGSTONE - 11th March 2025 |
| 28/02/2025 | Dorset CAN | Dorset CAN Newsletter - March 2025 |
| 28/02/2025 | Hazel & Chris Carter | BT phone kiosks closure comment |
| 01/03/2025 | Julie Thorne | Planning Application 2/2017/0848/Full (Westleigh) |

**1232. MATTERS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

* VJ DAY 80 /Summer Event arrangements
* Review of refreshed Neighbourhood Plan

**1233. NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting will be on **Thursday 4th April 2025 7:00 pm**, at the Portman Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:30