Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on Wednesday, 13th May 2026 at 7.00pm in Alweston Village Hall

Present:

Cllr D.Cuff (Chair), Cllr S.Adams, Cllr A.Harris, Cllr T.Rolls, Cllr J. Crocker, Cllr P Elsworth

In attendance:
Cllr Robin Legg, Dorset Councillor
Five members of the public
Parish Clerk, Penny Pitcher

Chair's Welcome
Chair (Cllr D Cuff) welcomed all to the meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting

26.01 Matters raised by members of the public

Speeding

Parishioners explained that a new café had opened at The Elms. As there are blinds bends between The Elms and Oxfords Bakery, the speed of the traffic was concerning, as there was traffic slowing to turn into The Elms and Oxfords Bakery. The Elms was difficult to pull out of safely. Could the speed limit along that particular stretch of road and Folke Lane be reduced to 30 mph?

Cllr Legg explained that there was poor compliance with the current speed limit of 40 mph. Some villages have successfully applied for and implemented a 20 mph speed limit.

There are no traffic calming measures on the main road. Average speed cameras are being installed on the dual carriageway. A speed camera is helpful, and flashing indicators do make a difference to drivers speeds.

The best approach could be:

- Ask for speed measurement on main road – Cllr Legg to enquire as to process
- Report missing or obscured road signs via the website
- Report 'near miss' traffic incidents via the website

Regarding Folke Lane

The traffic speed is partially determined by the number of houses next to the road over a set distance. If there has been development along the road frontage, this could be reviewed.

Tractors particularly are speeding and are wide in the road. There is no pavement and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable.

Chair…….Date……..

Cllr Legg will email to the clerk the details of the 20 mph scheme, and this will be an agenda item next meeting.

Faded road markings should be repainted.

Discussion around whether the parish council could borrow the Speed Indicator Device (SID) could be borrowed from Bishop's Caundle. Cllr Legg advised that use of SIDs requires:

- A survey to determine speeds
- A pole to fasten device to
- Training on use
- Advice from Highways where the device can be placed.

Cllr Legg suggested the most appropriate way forward was to:

- Measure the speeds along the road
- Apply to the 20 mph scheme
- Ask the police to patrol the roads
- Report near misses and fallen road signs.

Playground equipment

Cllr Cuff explained the playground was due the annual inspection by the end of May. The council are aware the multi use play equipment is reaching the end of its life, and needs replacing. The inspection report will give greater detail as to the condition of the main play equipment, the Multiuse. A similar replacement will cost in the region of £20,000.

If the equipment was to be replaced, funds would need to be raised, eg by applying to grants. Clerk advised that grants were generally not available to parish councils for this purpose.

Other play equipment could be considered instead of like for like replacement, eg goal posts or a pirate ship. The replacement needs to appeal to the widest age range possible.

A separate funding group could be set up with interested parishioners – for discussion at the next meeting.

A parishioner enquired whether metal detectors could be used on the playing field. The Chair advised this would be acceptable.

Community Transport Scheme

Cllr Legg advised the parishioners that Sherborne Town Council resolved to put money into a community transport scheme, i.e. a bus service one day per week, servicing the villages around Sherborne. The council would utilise the school buses and drivers between the times the children are dropped off at school and being picked up from school. The scheme would start in July, probably on a Tuesday, the exact route was still to be decided. The cost of the scheme is £125 per day. Folke Parish Council had previously agreed to support this scheme in principle.

Chair…….Date……..

Proposal to support the Community Transport Scheme:

Proposed: Cllr David Cuff
Seconded: Cllr Andy Harris

Cllr Cuff advised that he would attend the Community Transport Scheme meetings being arranged by Cllr Robin Legg.

The members of the public left the meeting

26.02 Chair's Report on the year

Chair read aloud his report on the year. The main points were:

- The previous chair, David Crothers, had unexpectedly stepped down and Cllr David Cuff was voted in as Chair.
- Cllr D Crothers, Cllr M Crothers and Cllr M Lugg had resigned from the parish council, creating three vacancies. The council were very pleased to have three prospective councillors offer their services.
- The playground continues to be well used by families. The multi play unit is reaching the end of its useful life and consideration needs to be given to its replacement.
- The land transfer title for the playground land had been completed, and the land was held in Trust, with Cllr Cuff and Cllr Adams as Trustees.
- Dorset Council had replaced a foot bridge connecting local footpaths.
- Speeding and overgrown hedges along Mundens Lane had been an issue, Sherborne Castle estate had been contacted about this.
- The car boot sale continued to be very popular.
- There is a scheme to have a weekly bus service into Sherborne.
- The defibrillator had been purchased and installed on the wall of the village hall.

The Annual Meeting

26.03 To appoint a Chair and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr David Cuff was nominated to be Chair by Cllr Andy Harris, seconded by Cllr Adams. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

26.04 To appoint a Vice Chair

Cllr Stuart Adams was nominated to be Vice Chair by Cllr David Cuff, seconded by Cllr Andy Harris. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

26.05 To receive and accept apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Phil Bennett.

Chair…….Date……..

26.06 Declarations of pecuniary and other interests in relation to the agenda

None were declared.

26.07 To adopt the Standing Orders for the Council

Cllr D Cuff proposed the Standing Orders for the Council be agreed with no amendments. **AGREED – ALL IN FAVOUR**

26.08 To confirm frequency of Full Council meetings and meeting dates

It was agreed to hold six a year, bi-monthly. They are generally to be held on the second working Wednesday of the month in January, March, May, July, September and November. All starting at 1900 hours. The next meeting being Wednesday 8th July 2026.

26.09 To agree the Code of Conduct for Councillors (annual) (circulated in advance)

Cllr D Cuff proposed the Standing Orders for the Council be agreed with no amendments. **AGREED – ALL IN FAVOUR**

26.10 To appoint a DAPTC representative

Cllr Pauline Elsworth expressed her interest in this role, and was nominated to be DAPTC representative. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

Financial Matters:

26.11 To appoint a Responsible Finance Officer

Mrs Penny Pitcher was nominated to be Responsible Finance Officer by the Parish Council. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

26.12 To appoint an internal auditor

Ms Paula Harding had been appointed as internal auditor for 2025/26.

26.13 To approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2025/26

The AGAR had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. The internal auditor will receive the AGAR for audit early June 2026. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return FOR 2025/26 was APPROVED.**

26.14 To agree to self certify as an exempt council under the AGAR

As the Parish Council is under the £25,000 income or expenditure threshold, the Parish Council can self certify itself as exempt from external auditing, provided all documents are put onto the website for transparency. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

26.15 To approve the Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment Review (circulated in advance)

- Financial Regulations are unchanged from previous year – **APPROVED**
- Risk Assessment Review is unchanged from previous year - **APPROVED**

Chair…….Date……..

Full Council

26.16 To agree the minutes of the previous meeting on 11th March 2026 are a true and accurate record

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

26.17 Issues arising from the last meeting

Bin for dog waste
Cllr Adams reported there would be a one-off cost of £500 for the dog waste bin and pad. Cllr Adams is finding out the cost for the bin to be emptied regularly.

Car boot sale
Traffic queuing for the car boot sale was off the main road by 7.25 am. This was a major improvement on previous years. Cllr Harris reported that smaller cars were grounding out and he has some road planings available to fill in some dips to prevent this happening again. There is another car boot sale arranged for two weeks time.

Asset valuation of playing field
The playing field has been professionally valued. The playing field is in Trust, and Cllr Cuff and Cllr Adams are Trustees. As the playing field is not owned by the Parish Council, the asset value is of no interest to the council.

Defibrillator training
Defibrillator training will be advertised in the White Hart Vale magazine.

26.18 Clerks report

Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor will be examining the parish financial accounts during week beginning 8 June 2026. The papers will be published on the parish council website by 1 July 2026.

A VAT return has been submitted for reimbursement amounting to £635.48.

26.19 To receive a report from Dorset Council

Cllr Robin Legg had already reported earlier in the meeting, during the public meeting.

26.20 To receive reports from Councillors attending meetings on behalf of the Parish Council

None to report.

26.21 Reasonable expectations from the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils

Councillors noted the Reasonable expectations from the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils.

Chair…….Date……..

26.22 Discussion of new play park equipment

This item had been discussed during the public meeting. Councillors to continue to ask views of those using the play park.

Cllr Crocker advised that the latches had broken on the gate, Cllr Adams to inspect and arrange a repair. The level of woodchip on the playpark was satisfactory.

26.23 Issue of speeding along Mundens Lane

This item had been discussed extensively during the public part of the meeting.

26.24 Transfer of funds to saving account

Chair advised the parish council had opened a saving account with Lloyds, and the monies from the tennis courts rental would be paid into this account. Clerk was given a cheque for these monies to pay into the savings account. It was acknowledged that the tennis courts had been very well kept.

26.25 To receive a finance report and to agree action in response to proposals and payment approvals

Councillors noted the below payments made under delegated powers by bank transfer out of Council:

FROM FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

09/03/2026	Luna Electrical	Defibrillator installation	£286.50
10/03/2026	Hugo Fox	Email Provision	£2.99
17/03/2026	Alweston Village Hall	Hire of hall for Parish Council meetings	£280.00
17/03/2026	Messrs MP Bennett	Hedge cutting	£240.00
17/03/2026	P and R Pitcher	Mileage	£19.80
17/03/2026	Service charges	Bank service charge	£4.25
30/03/2026	Hugo Fox	Website Provision	£11.99
30/03/2026	Microsoft	O365 Subscription Fee	£12.10

FROM FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

09/04/2026	Dorset Council	Grounds Maintenance	£1,669.26
10/04/2026	Hugo Fox	Email Provision	£2.99
20/04/2026	Service charges	Bank service charge	£4.25

Clerk requested that the above payments as listed be sanctioned. **ALL IN FAVOUR.**

26.26 To determine a response to any planning applications received.

None received

Chair…….Date……..

26.27 Items of urgent nature subject to Chair's approval

Cllr Cuff advised he would review the amount of precept received, ready for agreement at the budget setting meeting in November.

26.28 Confidential matters (public and press to leave the meeting)

None

26.29 Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 8th July 2026 at 7.00pm

There being no further business to be transacted the meeting closed at 20:30 hours

Chair…….Date……..