

HILTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Hilton Parish Council held on Tuesday 5th November 2024

PRESENT: Catherine Langham (CL) (Chairman), Clive Jones (CJ), Rodney Northover (RN), Chris Roberts (CR) George Sotiriadis (GS), Marion Walbridge (MW), Ian Woodhurst (IW)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. David Green, Clerk (DG), Cllr Jill Haynes (JH) (Zoom)

Members of the Public – None

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd September 2024 were agreed and signed the Chairman.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST PC MEETING**

Community Transport Funding – The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council has now, with other Parishes, made a contribution of £ 500 towards the continuance of the Community Transport Service, which has proved to be a very useful service. This is likely to be an ongoing commitment for future years and will be budgeted for accordingly.

Parking by the Chapel at Ansty Cross – it was noted that there had been several ‘near misses’ at the Chapel junction caused by a parked vehicle partially blocking the road. The Chairman agreed to speak to the occupier to enquire whether consideration could be given to making parking less obstructive.

Dog Attacks on Sheep – it was reported that a loose dog had attacked and killed sheep earlier in the year. It was agreed to post a notice in the Village News requesting that dogs are kept on leads near grazing sheep at all times, pointing out that failure to do so is a criminal offence.

5. UNITARY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Haynes had submitted written reports for September and October 2024 and noted that the new Dorset Council has now published its draft Local Plan. This has been backed up by feedback from the resident’s survey and the recent “Big Conversation” events.

The Vision Statement of the new Council is “Working together to create a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations.”

There are 4 main priorities in the plan:

- a) Provide high quality housing
- b) Grow our economy
- c) Communities for all – setting out the role of improving population health
- d) Respond to the climate and nature crisis

JH noted that there is very little detail as to how the priorities will be achieved. Apparently this will emerge as the following strategies - Climate and Nature Recovery Strategy, Housing Strategy, Economic Growth Strategy, People and Culture Strategy with a Strategic Asset Management Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan – are developed.

The main problem is that new policy initiatives cannot be introduced in time for the current budget setting process for the years 2025/26. These aspirations can therefore only be met by either a) funding from reserves or b) reducing other services. The council is committed to keeping a fixed contingency reserve of 10% of the annual budget (£376.7M) and the reserves are quite close to this figure now. There is a £10.1M overspend on the current budget at the end the first quarter.

JH has a general concern that rural communities seem to be being marginalised, and are in fact invisible in the new plan; not a single Big Conversation happened in a rural community – the nearest locations were Dorchester & Shaftesbury.

There is a considerable focus on regeneration in Weymouth, with a new Corporate Director being appointed for that task; this, however, appears to be at the exclusion of other communities. The major issues of rural housing, transport and economic activity appear to be overlooked with the emphasis of policy initiatives in urban areas.

JH suggested that Parish Councillors make their own responses to the plan.

6. OPEN FORUM

There were no public questions.

7. COUNCILLOR VACANCY

It was noted that that there had been one written application for the Councillor vacancy. It was unanimously agreed to re-appoint Clive Jones to the Parish Council. Proposed CL, 2nd MW. The Chairman welcomed Clive to the Council.

8. FINGERPOST PROJECT UPDATE

The Chairman reported that Cuckoo Lane fingerpost restoration was now complete, including replacement of the top roundel. The CPRE have agreed to award of a grant of £150 towards the refurbishment cost, although this may be increase once the final invoice for the work is received. The Ansty Cross fingerpost remains to be assessed.

9. PARISH SPEED LIMITS AND ROAD MARKINGS EVALUATION

IW noted that there was a general concern in Hilton that vehicles (and cyclists) were speeding through the village and that existing road markings may not be adequate. The question of the possibility of a 20 mph limit had also been raised.

It was noted that the issue of speed limits throughout the Parish had been extensively reviewed in 2021 with speed surveys, with a view to considering whether any sites were suitable for the use of a Speed Indicator Device (SID). Following a review of the survey results, Dorset Council's Road Safety Team has determined that none of the sites met the criteria for SID use, with '85% quartile' results being very close to the required speed limits.

The Clerk has asked the Road Safety Team to evaluate whether or not anywhere in the Parish meets the required 'A.B C' criteria to allow the introduction of a 20 mph limit:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/20-mile-per-hour-mph-policy#assessment-criteria-for-consideration-of-potential-20mph-schemes>

The Clerk asked IW to provide details of road marking concerns in the village and will ask the Community Highways Officer to review existing provision and also to consider road re-surfacing in the Knapp. It was noted that 'unofficial' road signs in Hilton and elsewhere in the Parish had been removed, by whom it was not known.

10. BYWAY TO ALL TRAFFIC APPLICATION

Cllr Roberts has raised the issue of the lack of signage marking the 'unclassified road' running between Aller Lane & Coombe Hill.

Following a subsequent enquiry to Dorset Council, it has been advised that this track, with many other routes, has been the subject of a Definitive Map Modification order application by the British Horse Society for the route to be reclassified as a Byway to All Traffic (B.O.A.T). The cut-off date for determination of these classifications being 2026

It was noted the formal consultation period for this review has yet to commence. It was unanimously agreed that it was very clear that the Parish Council would not want to encourage use of this route by motor vehicles of any type, which a B.O.A.T designation would permit. The preference would be for this track to be redesignated as a 'restricted byway'. The PC agreed to await formal commencement of the review before responding.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, DECISIONS & ISSUES

11.1 New applications

P/VOC/2024/05913 - Rose Cottage Aller Lane Lower Ansty DT2 7PX - Erect two storey extensions (demolish existing) (with variation of condition 2 to planning permission. It was noted that this related to a brick detail change only. There were no objections.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

12.1 Finance report:

The Clerk reported that the finances were in a good position, at this stage of the year, with the bank balance at standing at £ £8,095.

12.2 Retrospective payments approved:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Reason</u>
04/09/2024	£ 17.24	David Green	Expenses - July-Sept
09/09/2024	£ 500.00	Community Transport Group	PC contribution
30/09/2024	£ 226.00	David Green	Sept 2024 pay
11/10/2024	£ 162.00	HMRC	Q2 2024/2025 PAYE
28/10/2024	£ 226.00	David Green	Oct 2024 pay

12.3 New payments - Clerks expenses of £ 9.00 were authorised.

12.4 Clerk's Pay - It was agreed to increase Clerks pay and settle arrears in line with the recently agreed Local Government Services pay settlement.

12.5 Grant Approvals & applications

It was unanimously agreed to provide £ 50 towards maintenance of the Church clock

The Chairman noted that a grant application will be made by Hilton PCC concerning repairs to the Church roof, which will cost in the region of £ 2,500 to repair. The Chairman noted that the Church is used as general community meeting place and funding requests should reasonably be considered.

12.6 Budget & Precept proposal

The Clerk recommended a precept request of £ 6,660.00 for 2025/2026, an increase of £ 237 (3.7%), the effect of this being negligible, raising Band D Council Tax from £ 27.17 to £ 27.18.

This will be reviewed in January 2025 following revision of the tax base but is unlikely to change greatly. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this budget and precept proposal.

The Clerk noted that the PC has been advised that by the PC's bankers that all non-profit business accounts are being converted to 'Community Accounts' with effect from January 2025, for which there will be a £ 4.25 per month charge. It was agreed that that there was no realistic alternative other than to continue with present banking arrangements.

13. HIGHWAYS & RIGHTS OF WAY REPORTS

Ansty bridge railings – the Clerk has been advised that a works order has been raised for this repair but a repair date has not yet been confirmed.

14. CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence received in the period Sept – November 2024:

Date	From	Subject
04/09/2024	Pamela Rees-Boughton	Support for community bus service
05/09/2024	Dorset Council	RE: Ansty Bridge guardrail update
09/09/2024	DAPTC	Expressions of interest for in person councillor training - North Dorset
23/09/2024	Dorset Highways	TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF VILLAGE ROAD, HILTON
23/09/2024	DAPTC	DAPTC 2024 AGM Notification
30/09/2024	DAPTC	October - Upcoming Training & Events at a Glance
03/10/2024	Wessex Water	Outreach event
08/10/2024	Dorset CPRE	Dorset CPRE September/October Newsletter
11/10/2024	Dorset Highways	TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE PLECK HILL, HAZELBURY BRYAN
16/10/2024	Dorset Council	Dorset Council's draft Council Plan
17/10/2024	DAPTC	Upcoming Training events

It was noted that a HM Government is consulting in relation to the possibility of permitting online Parish Council meetings. It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should be permitted to hold online meetings in specific circumstances (bad weather for example) at the Chairman's request. It was also agreed that proxy voting should be permitted if members are unable to attend a physical or online meeting for any reason. The Clerk will return appropriate responses.

15. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Precept confirmation

16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 in the at the Fox Inn, Lower Ansty.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20.07

Signed(Chairman) Date

Report to Parrish Councils Sept 2024

Cllr Jill Haynes Chalk Valleys ward

Dear Clerks, Councillors and members of the public, I thought this time I would give you an update on some of the processes that we are involved with as Dorset Councillors. Dorset is a member led council but in order to give this lead there are many policies and strategies that have to be agreed so that officers know the way forward. It is a rather slow and process driven way of operating but does give clarity not just to staff but other organisations and indeed central government as to the way we intend to run the council. Some of the strategies are mandatory requirements of central government and have to be reviewed annually.

At the start of the new term of a council there are often changes in direction and priorities and then a larger number of these documents need to be reviewed. This happens through the two Overview Committees. There are two cross party committees, chaired by the party in power, one covering People and Health and the other Place and Resources. These committees give the steer to Cabinet on new policies and their recommendations are then ratified and or amended at the next Cabinet meeting.

So far the following papers have been reviewed, debated and agreed:

- The Extra Care Housing Strategy – Looking to supply supported living to both elderly people and those needing additional support.
- The Youth Justice Plan
- The Growth and Economic Regeneration Strategy – this is a vital follow on after the government has withdrawn funding from the Local Economic Partnership (LEP)
- Review of Dorset Council Waste Strategy
- Strategic Asset Management Plan – a key enabler to the council plan and it is how we manage the councils wide and diverse property estate.
- Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children’s partnership Annual report
- Dorset Community Safety Plan and the Pan Dorset reoffending planning document
- The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Aspire Adoption Service Annual Report

There is a forward plan for both committees about which policies/strategies are coming to future meetings and this is continuously being updated. There are often working groups of the two Overview Committees working on items on the forward plans.

Going forward the two Scrutiny Committees (People and Health as well as Place and Resource) have the job of reviewing the effectiveness of the policies and ensuring that they are giving good value for money and successful outcomes for the people of Dorset. These committees are chaired by the opposition but are again cross party.

As well as being a member of at least one of these committees most members are also on either a Planning committee or Licensing, as well as a number of sub committees. The committees all require a considerable amount of background reading of papers to understand the full picture under discussion. There are also regular on line webinars on a wide variety of topics to ensure councillors are well informed when they make decisions.

When reading this back this all sounds very dry but the truth is that it is mostly both interesting and important to support our communities by making informed choices.