

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL held on 14th May 2025 in the Reading Room, Milton Abbas at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Mr I. Baker (Vice Chair)
Mr P. Ford
Mr T. Ives
Mr S. Martin

Mr S. Driver (Chairman)
Mr S. Gould
Mrs J. Jordan
Mrs D. Wyatt

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk) Mrs E. Parker (Dorset Councillor) and 6 members of the general public.

1. APOLOGIES None

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

IB took the chair. It was proposed by IB, seconded by DW and unanimously agreed that SD should be elected Chairman. SD took the chair.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by JJ, seconded by DW and unanimously agreed that IB should be elected vice chairman.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Transport Adviser	Steve Gould
DAPTC Rep	Stuart Driver
Rights of Way Officer	Steve Gould
Tree Warden	Lawrence Usherwood
MATCH /Jane's Wood Rep	Robbie Golledge
Flood Warden	Steve Gould
Emergency Officer/Contact	Steve Gould & Victoria Macnamara
Elliegram / Communications Officer	Stuart Driver
Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator	Jill Jordan
Playpark	Steve Gould, Tom Ives, Steve Gorson
Neighbourhood Plan Working Party	Simon Martin
Welcome Pack	Tayab Khandwala
Milton Abbas Health & Disability Fund	Tom Ives
Tregonwell Almshouses	Rodger Pressland
Website Liaison	Simon Martin
Emily Faulkner Trustee	Dawn Wyatt
Defibrillator Management	Tayab Khandwala, Iain Baker, Phil Ford
Fingerposts	Stuart Driver, Tom Ives
BT Kiosk	Stuart Driver & Dawn Wyatt
Electric Vehicle Charge Points	Simon Martin
Village Flower Boxes	Phil Ford, Tom Ives

Jubilee Bench	Jill Jordan, Freddy Robinson
Lloyds Bank Signatories	Iain Baker, Stuart Driver, Tom Ives & Simon Martin

5. FUTURE MEETING DATES

It was unanimously agreed that the council should continue to meet on the second Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November.

6. REVIEW OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Councillors had reviewed the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment Document, Privacy Policy, Welcome Pack and other policies. It was unanimously agreed that the governing documents are adequate. The Clerk reminded Councillors of their legal responsibility to ensure that their Register of Interests is kept up to date.

7. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was unanimously agreed to continue with Darkin Miller Ltd.

8. MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Council meeting of 15th May 2024 had been approved at the Parish Council meeting on 10th July 2024. There were no matters arising.

9. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

SD presented the Chairman's Report. (See ADDENDA)

Mrs F. Robinson expressed thanks to SD and the Councillors on behalf of the residents.

10. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented the financial report. (See ADDENDA)

11. DORSET COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Mrs E. Parker was in attendance to answer questions, but due to IT issues had been unable to supply a written report.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed:

(Presiding Chairman)

Date:

ADDENDA:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025

This has been my first year as Chair of your Parish Council, and looking back over the over the year as I prepared this report it's quite an eye opener to be reminded of the multitude of projects, topics and events that have been covered since May 2024. I started by reviewing the previous Chair - Nigel Hodder's report from last year, noting the sincerity of his comments with regard to our Parish Clerk – Liz Sellen and wishing her luck in (and I quote) “keeping this lot in check” going forward. Well, I for one have heavily relied on your support and guidance over the past year, and I'm sure I speak for us all when I extend my sincere gratitude to you for your organisational skills, patience, knowledge and assistance throughout the year. I do hope keeping us all in check hasn't been too wearing!

While I'm on the topic of passing on thanks, I would like to specifically mention Tayab for his personal contributions to the Parish Council over the years. While we understand your reasons for wanting to step down at this point, we've all appreciated and enjoyed your contributions to Parish Council debates, decisions and endeavours, and you will be missed. Don't be a stranger.

One of Tayab's ongoing duties is to keep a check on our defib equipment in the village – something he undertakes quietly and without fuss. The defib is a vital piece of equipment which was needed not so long back, and was fit for purpose and available for use thanks to your diligence. The capabilities of the defib equipment are quite extensive, and training will be available as part of the Annual Parish Meeting on 21st (next Weds) along with an opportunity to discuss initial steps around Emergency Planning for the village, starting with the topic of Fire Risk. I would encourage as many of you as possible to come along.

Other hot topics this year have been:

Potholes, road subsidence and resurfacing – where a long and drawn out series of emails, photographic evidence and site visits has finally resulted in a date for the repair of the surfaces at Catherine's Well (confirmed as 28th/29th August) with other more minor pothole repairs already undertaken or ongoing.

Tree Maintenance at Jane's Wood, Seymour Woodland and Sylvan Row – where we recognise there have been dismay voiced over the length of time taken to jump through the various hurdles required before work can commence. I am glad to report that we now have Laurence Usherwood assisting us with TPO's, quotes etc on a consultancy basis, so we are anticipating traction there.

The **land behind Middleton Row** (parish-owned) is earmarked for potential affordable housing under the Neighbourhood Plan. The council has sought planning advice and agrees the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan should be reviewed (e.g. via a “light-touch” review estimated at ~£9,300) to accommodate changes since then. No final decisions will be made until residents are consulted.

The Parish Council also fielded local concerns about Dorset Council's proposed Street **Local Heritage List** (letters sent by Dorset Council without prior PC consultation), promising to pursue clarity on the scheme in future meetings.

Other activities have included

Ongoing support of local events and communications. The council helped organize an annual **D-Day** commemorative event (in June 2024), where £136 was raised for charity through public donations. We also recently marked the **80th VE Day**

anniversary (May 2025) with activities at the Sports Ground including flag-raising (supported by the Combined Cadet Force from MA School) and a BBQ where in excess of £800 was raised for charity.

The **Plus Bus** community minibus service continues to be a successful venture, and the villagers suggested expanding the service further (e.g. trips to Bath). The council has agreed to promote these ideas with Dorset Community Transport

The **Village Bulletin** has been revived, and the editorial team would welcome any material or suggestions for its improvement, going forward. The Parish Council also have stepped in to take on ownership of the **Elliegram** following Ellie Payne's completely understandable decision to retire after many years of looking after that key part of Parish communication.

Also, smaller items like the **Boules pitch restoration** was undertaken by some of the Councillors (you know who you are, ladies) – although it may need doing again by now. The **BT Telephone Kiosk** is now up and running as a book swap

Finally, several small repairs were carried out locally: the **viewing platform** at St. James Church and **stone steps** by The Old Hospital were refurbished; and overgrown hedges and laurel bushes (e.g. by the bus stop) were cut back. The **PlayPark** has also seen some significant investment both in terms of time and money over the past year. The Parish Council arranged warranty work on the **zip-wire** and **swings**, reinstated **rubber matting** under equipment, arranged for the **replacement of rotten timbers** and **re-levelling** of the **Captain Mannering** climbing apparatus, and have planned further tree/hedge maintenance along with remedial work on the skate ramp.

In closing, as mentioned at the start of my address, it has been a busy year and I remain wholeheartedly appreciative of the Councillors and Clerk for their efforts and determination. I am only too aware that we all have busy lives, and a number of us work full time, and I'm sure that this is appreciated and respected by the Parishioners too.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2024

Receipts

Our precept for 2024/2025 was £22,736 a significant increase on the previous five years precept to accrue towards upcoming tree works. Other receipts included £390 from the legendary Chilli Fest and a grant from the Street Fair of £500 towards the playpark.

Expenditure

Expenditure of £23,927 was due in part to the £14,026 repair costs for the Captain Mannering play park equipment. It should be noted that some expenditure incurred in 2024/2025 has not yet been invoiced; in particular, skate park repairs, the balance of play park maintenance; these expenses will be funded from reserves in 2025/2026 on top of the budgeted spend for 2025/2026.

Overview

Due to the excess of expenditure over precept, we start 2025/2026 with slightly lower reserves than last year and we are planning to carry out further tree works and play park repairs, however the precept has been maintained at £22,736 as some expenditure can be funded from reserves.