

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL held online via Zoom on 4TH May 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Mr P. Amor	Mr D. Cocking
Mr S. Driver	Mr N. Hodder
Mr T. Ives	Mr R. Woodhouse

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk) and 4 members of the general public.

RW advised that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of writing up the minutes and will be deleted afterwards.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr S. Gould, Mr T. Khandwala, Mrs E. Parker (Dorset Councillor)

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

DC took the Chair. It was proposed by NH, seconded by TI and unanimously agreed that RW should be elected Chairman. RW took the chair.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by RW and unanimously agreed that DC should be elected vice chairman.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Councillors retained the following, for review following co-options for numerous vacancies:

Transport Adviser	Nigel Hodder
DAPTC Rep	Paul Amor
Rights of Way Officer	Steve Gould
Tree Warden	Steve Bowers
MATCH /Jane's Wood Rep	Chris Dieck
Flood Wardens	Steve Gould & Rowan Woodhouse
Emergency Officer/Contact	Steve Gould
Homewatch	Ellie Payne
Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator	Nigel Hodder & Freddy Robinson
Playpark Committee	Gavin Bridle, Tom Ives, Steve Gould, Jacqui Cooper, Susan Woodhouse
Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party	Susan Woodhouse & Rowan Woodhouse and those detailed on website
Welcome Pack	Tayab Khandwala
Milton Abbas Health & Disability Fund	Tom Ives
Tregonwell Almshouses	Keith Armstrong
Website Liaison	Rowan Woodhouse
Emily Faulkner Trustee	Leo Hughes
Defibrillator Management	David Cocking, James Farnham, Tina Sparks

Fingerposts	David Cocking
Lloyds Bank Signatories	David Cocking, Nigel Hodder, Tom Ives & Rowan Woodhouse

5. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, CODE OF CONDUCT OR OTHER POLICIES AS REQUIRED

NH suggested that Parish Council meetings are held in May, July, September, November, January and March and additional lines of communication to ensure parishioners are kept informed and updated with relevant news in a timely manner. In order to facilitate decision making on urgent matters between meetings, Standing Orders would be amended with the addition of the following paragraph;

“In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The clerk will further consult with the chairman for guidance, as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority will continue where meetings are planned to be less than one month apart, and it is not possible to convene a legal Extraordinary meeting between scheduled Council meetings.”

DC suggested that the reduced number of Parish Council meetings are supplemented by online “Village Meetings” to ensure that regular engagement with residents is perpetuated.

It was proposed by NH seconded by SD and majority agreed that this would be trialled for a 12 month period. TI abstained.

6. MATTERS ARISING None

7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

RW presented the Chairman’s Report. (See ADDENDA)

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented the financial report. (See ADDENDA)

9. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS

The Clerk read the final Divisional report from Mrs Hilary Cox (County Councillor) (See ADDENDA).

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed:

(Presiding Chairman)

Date:

ADDENDA:

Chairman's report

Financial Report

District Councillor's Report

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

It has been an unusual 12 months for everyone. Daily lives have been affected in many ways to a lesser or greater extent, however the life of the village has continued, and people have come together to support each other. Ordinary life has been continued through services such as Ellie Payne's Ellie-gram and Nigel Hodder's Neighbourcar. David Cocking has continued to refurbish finger posts around the village to a high standard, and the Play Park have continued to maintain the equipment at the play park; including a replacement to the damaged slide; ensuring younger residents have somewhere safe to play. The Neighbourhood Plan has progressed, the referendum is scheduled for Thursday 6th May. New residents have continued to relocate to Milton Abbas; Tayab Khandwala has continued to update and circulate the Welcome Pack as required. Steve Gould has, through Steeptonbill Farm Shop, provided a local source of essentials during the lockdown period. It has been encouraging to see the village continue to function in these unusual times.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2021

Receipts

Our precept for 2020/2021 was held at £15,700. Other receipts included an insurance claim of £1,126 for damage to the Captain Mannering equipment in the park and various play park fundraising efforts totalling £367. A VAT rebate of £828 is due to be recovered.

Expenditure

Expenditure has reduced; other than some fingerpost restoration expenses, due to inactivity over the lockdown period hire costs and travel costs have all decreased and NP expenses were lower than previous years as the plan has neared completion.

Overview

Adjusted funds on hand £43,949 remain high, reflective of the large VAT rebate on play park expenditure in 2019/20 and the unexpected restrictions on activity, so the Precept for 2021/2022 has been maintained at £15,700.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT 2021

Who would have imagined a year ago that we will have experienced so much change and disruption to our own daily lives along with everyone across the world, no exceptions, no one untouched by the devastation of a global Pandemic,

Looking out at our countryside it has often felt that we are isolated from the ills of the world, but we know that we have not been. We have sadly lost people in our villages though this Pandemic and it's important to remember them and their families.

There have been positives. Just look at how our communities all pulled together to help one another, to reach out to our neighbour, to enquire about their health, whether they needed assistance with food shopping, with prescription collections, and above all we began to ask each other 'how are you feeling'.

With mental health becoming far more acceptable to discuss and to talk about I am glad that so many people have felt they can talk about their feelings because talking is key to getting help if needed or sometimes just making us feel better, knowing we are not alone, that there are people who care and who are willing to listen.

While we have all been busy in our villages with many more people putting their hands up to volunteer, Dorset Council has not been standing still in the most challenging of times for an organisation of its size to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all residents within the Dorset

council area. At times I am sure that many thoughts that Dorset Council of course got things wrong, but it also got so much right dealing with a huge range of issues for its 376,480 residents and 5,705 businesses. Put into context the enormity of what DC had to do in a very short space of time, showing it can be agile as it responded swiftly with its partners to the very clear seriousness and the well of anxiety and panic by creating a programme of seven workstreams. And all this with 2,500 members of staff all working remotely from home overnight.

- Contact Centre across multiple organisations
- Delivery network
- Food and Medicine Supply
- Community Support
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Digital
- Data

The Council knew there were 10,000 people in the community (which rose to a high of 18,000 in the Dorset area at one point) who had been told they should shield as they were considered to be clinically vulnerable. The enormous amount of work by Adults and Children's teams along with colleagues in the NHS, local partners charities and direct from residents and Councillors cannot be underestimated. Everyone who needed assistance received it through an incredibly complex delivery system and using all the resources available to the Council. Staff from across the council services were all part of delivering the essential items that our vulnerable residents needed.

The Council faced potential communication and awareness barriers. These were quickly and expertly addressed by the Communications Teams working together across all the partners to co-ordinate delivery on social media, traditional channels and bespoke communications for residents with specific needs.

During April resident needs changed from enquiries about food and general advice to concerns about medicine supply and request for help with chores (ie. dog walking). 375 highways vehicles were re-deployed, 250 people from DC, Dorset Public Health, Dorset CCG and five local volunteer organisations joined forces with a total pool of more than 1,000 volunteers across the Dorset Council area, all aiding where needed.

DC Highways crews took the surprise decision to deliver Easter eggs in all the food boxes leading up to Easter, I know how much this was appreciated.

Loneliness and mental health became a focus from the contacts received into DC along with the continued contact for food, medicine, chores and general advice. The project team expanded to 2,500 volunteers including colleagues from Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services and DC Housing Services in order to meet safeguarding plans to support residents who members of the team had an awareness of but whom DC had not received contact from or managed to contact themselves, ie. people that there were concerns about.

The work of DC settled down a little as the Lockdown eased but some areas had to deal with issues relating to the large numbers of visitors. During this time the systems were consolidated, and time was given to prepare for any anticipated future restrictions.

A Local Outbreak Management Plan was developed to enable delivery in the future. Staff from Revenues and Benefits service were also added to the team in order to all work together providing financial support to residents.

Not only did this project create in three weeks a collaborative and partnership-led customer-focussed, service-delivery system to a scale that would have usually taken more than a year to negotiate, design and develop, DC sustained this service for four and a half months and have stood it up again twice subsequently. In so doing, they have demonstrated to the people of Dorset how much their council cares for them, and to all employees of Dorset Council what can be achieved when boundaries are removed and we blend technology with humanity to solve extreme and urgent problems.

COMMUNICATIONS DURING PANDEMIC

21,000 outgoing calls were made and 13,900 incoming contacts were received across email, telephone and online, approximately 1 contact made every 2 operational minutes.

30,000 emails sent to extremely clinically vulnerable residents during 2020/21

DORSET COUNCIL

DC has provided over £259 million of Covid Government grants and support to local business since April 2020

DC has exceeded its target of providing affordable new-build homes

Due to DC's speed of response to call for grants from Government the Council secured £19m to help deliver the climate and ecological emergency strategy

Dorset Children's Services have developed ambitious plans to create a new school for SEND children and young people for approx. 280 pupils and a leading national Centre of Excellence at St Mary's School. DC also announced an investment of £37.5m over the next 5 years, providing the best possible education for all Dorset SEND children and young people, St Mary's is just one part of this.

During the last year my workload increased with enquiries from residents and Parish Councils. Things did become quieter once the initial worries and concerns were dealt with.

Help has always been available and how to access assistance for our residents.

I do not know how many virtual meetings I have attended but its been a few and I am pleased to say that only one had a technical issue, so much has been achieved within these meeting be it a Parish council meeting or council meetings.

There have been huge numbers of planning applications coming in (double the amount normally receive by the Planning Department). I am fully aware that many parishes have been less than satisfied about the lack of communication from planning during the last year. This is something that needs to addressed and improved.

There has been an influx of licensing applications mainly variations. All hearings have been organised extremely well by councillors licensing officers and democratic services.

Virtual Council Meetings – High Court Ruling

Due to the High Court decision last week, Town, Parish, District, Unitary and Borough Councillors will need to return to physical meetings rather than carry on with virtual meetings after May7th

I am happy to be able to go back to face-to-face meetings again it is important. However, due to current covid-19 regulations and safety rules it is not possible to hold meetings involving all Dorset Councillors in any of the buildings they own and therefore these meetings cannot be held until June 21st, assuming regulations change when indoor meetings involving larger numbers are hopefully allowed again. Town and Parish Councils face the same issue.

Like many of the Parish Council Meetings, Dorset Council has moved its annual meeting forward to avoid the May 7th deadline, with that in mind I am only able to attend one Parish Council AGM

The Leader of DC, Cllr Flower states "Being able to hold Council Meetings virtually has been widely welcomed and a great success for Local Government during the pandemic. I am incredibly disappointed regarding the High Court ruling announced on Wednesday.