

The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)
Meeting 20th February 2024

The minutes of the 172nd meeting held on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 7.30pm.

These minutes do not constitute a true record until ratified at the next meeting of the Parish Council

Present: Cllr T Craven, (Chairman), Cllr J Martin, Cllr G Stokes, Cllr Mrs V Stokes.

In attendance: R. Jacques (Clerk), County Cllr J Somper, Mr P Carpenter (Dorset Highways) and 6 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr N Mccombe.

The Chairman welcomed the Councillors, Mr Carpenter and the members of the public to the meeting.

226. Public Consultation: The Chairman suggested that as many of the members of the public were in attendance to ask Mr P Carpenter questions about the flooding in the area, the issue would be discussed under agenda item 6 - Highways. All present agreed. He asked if the members of the public had any other issues to raise. They confirmed there were none.

227. Declarations of Interests: Cllr Mrs V Stokes declared an interest for item 11 on the agenda – Margaret Marsh Parish Warden expenses £75.

228. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2023: Cllr Mrs V Stokes proposed “**that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2023 should be approved as a correct record of that meeting**”. Cllr J Martin seconded, and the vote was unanimous.

229. Matters Arising:

- **Flooding** (see minute 230 as agreed in minute 226).
- **Councillor Email Accounts:** The Chairman reminded the Members of the suggestion at the last meeting that all have a dedicated Parish Council (PC) email address and of the subsequent email exchanges exploring various ways this could be arranged without incurring additional cost to the PC. He proposed that all Members create their own Gmail account to be used specifically for their PC business and made available to the public. All agreed to the recommendation.
- **Payroll Provider:** The Clerk confirmed that Accounting and Office Solutions, Shaftesbury (AOS Ltd) has been appointed to run the payroll for the PC.
- **Emergency Planning and Response to the Residents' Survey:** Cllr J Martin reported that two residents had responded to the survey; the survey and the responses received will be an agenda item for discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting in May. A member of the public asked what had prompted the survey and emergency planning leaflet as it had created panic amongst some residents. The Chairman explained that the survey and the emergency planning leaflet, although delivered at the same time, were not connected and expressed concern that any residents might have assumed a connection. Cllr Martin added that at a DAPTC meeting he had received the Emergency Planning leaflet for residents and had been advised to encourage residents to have their own Emergency Action Plan. At the last meeting the Councillors agreed that the leaflet should be distributed to households and placed on noticeboards. To save Councillors' time some distributed the leaflet with the resident survey letter. Cllr Martin emphasised that the

Minutes for the meeting held on 20th February 2024 continued

letter, which had been approved by the Councillors, fully explained the purpose of the survey.

230. To receive Dorset Council Report from County Cllr J Somper: Cllr Somper had sent her report in advance of the meeting which had been circulated to the Parish Councillors and is available on the Parish Council website. Cllr Somper asked the members of the public and the Councillors to note that the Dorset Council's Local Transport team is holding a roadshow in Shaftesbury Town Hall on 22nd February between 10:00am and 2:00pm and asked all to promote the event. She highlighted the Grants for Community Tree Planting section in her report emphasising that the scheme also provides advice and support on the types of trees and the ongoing care required for any tree planting plans communities may have. She raised awareness of a Spitfire event taking place at the Compton Abbas Airfield August 10th and 11th. The event organisers anticipate attendance of approximately 10,000 people which will result in some road and footpath closures local to the site. Iwerne Minster and Fontmell Magna villages will be impacted most. Cllr Somper, having heard the Chairman will not be standing for election in May, expressed her thanks for all his support, she also thanked Cllr Mrs V Stokes, who is also not standing for election, for her twenty plus years as a Parish Councillor.

231. Highways:

231. Highways: The Chairman thanked Mr Carpenter for attending the meeting and invited him to address the meeting. Mr Carpenter explained that the weather has impacted the highways a lot and this in turn has affected many people. Enquiries and reports of highways issues should be registered on the Dorset Council website; these are prioritised and dealt with as soon as possible. Link to report highway issues (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/report-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>). The Highways department is aware of the local flooding issues caused in general by heavy rain and the area being a flood plain. The Chairman asked Mr Carpenter to take the following questions and concerns.

East Orchard:

- A resident reported that the river between East Orchard and West Orchard has fallen branches and in places trees which are having an impact on the flow. He asked whether it is the Environment Agency or the landowner who is responsible for clearing the trees etc from the river. Mr Carpenter, replied that he believes it to be the landowner but will seek confirmation. The resident asked what happens if the landowner will not carry out the clearing. Mr Carpenter replied that there is a procedure in place.
- Cllr Mrs V Stokes asked if the Environment Agency would supervise any clearing of the river because she is aware of situations whereby landowners have become involved in disputes with the Environment Agency for not complying with their guidance. Mr Carpenter explained any river clearance works means careful planning between the Highways Department, the Flood Risk Team and the Environment Agency.
- A resident commented the flooding has been significantly worse this winter and that many of the drains need clearing again.
- The Chairman asked if there is anything the residents can do to resolve the issues effectively. He asked if improved signage, including height indicators which would show the depth of the water, would help deter drivers driving into the flood water. A resident added that bollards indicating where the curbs are might help deter drivers going over them onto the verges.
- Cllr Mrs V Stokes asked how often drains are cleared. Mr Carpenter replied within Dorset Highways: Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards &

Minutes for the meeting held on 20th February 2024 continued –

Defects drains are requested to be cleared when they are 75% blocked and likely to cause flooding on the carriageway.

- General discussion followed expressing concern that when drains are cleared the silt is left by the side which quickly blocks them again.
- Cllr Somper reported there has been over 25,000 highways issues reported across the county this winter and the Highways team have worked very hard to resolve the problems. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the link for reporting issues is on Cllr Somper's report.
- Cllr Martin asked what the longevity of the pothole filling is as many do not seem to last for very long. Mr Carpenter explained there are different types of repair depending on the type of pothole. On occasion for the safety of road users temporary measures are used. Link for further information: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/maintenance/road-maintenance/pothole-repairs>.

Margaret Marsh

- Cllr Mrs V Stokes reported that there are many potholes in Church Lane which have been detailed on the Dorset Council website. The lane is becoming almost impassable.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carpenter for responding to the concerns of the members of the public and the Councillors.

- 232. Footpaths:** Cllr Martin reported a footpath issue at Margaret Marsh. A barbed wire fence has been placed across the footpath. Cllr Mrs V Stokes agreed to investigate.
- 233. Margaret Marsh Pond:** The Chairman asked Cllr Mrs V Stokes for an update of the condition of the pond. Cllr Mrs V Stokes reported that the pond is quite large at the moment, it has a secure stock fence around it but the area is very overgrown. Cllr G Stokes agreed to visit the site and report to the next meeting.
- 234. Planning Matters:** The Chairman thanked Cllr J Martin for his assistance with site visits and producing comments for the Dorset Council Planning Portal; the comments are available to the public on the portal. The following planning applications had been sent to Councillors:

The Chairman provided a short update of some applications.

- P/LBC/2023/07474. Step House East Orchard. Proposal to carry out internal and external alterations. Closed 25th January 2024. **No objections were raised.**
- P/HOU/2023/07017. New House, Church Lane Margaret Marsh. Proposal to Erect single storey extension. Closed 26th December 2023. **Comments uploaded to portal.**
- P/PAAC/2024/00095. Field View Farm, Fishey Lane, East Orchard. Change of use and conversion of agricultural building to 1 dwelling house. Closed 31st January 2024. **No objections were raised.**
- P/PAAC/2024/00096. The Zinc Barn, Manston. Change of use and conversion of agricultural building to 1 dwelling house (Use Class C3). Closed 7th February 2024. **No objections were raised.**
- P/PABA/2024/00232. Land at Church Lane, East Orchard. Erect agricultural building for the storage of hay, straw, fodder and machinery. No closing date. **This was a pre-planning application for a large barn on newly purchased land. With the assistance of Cllr Somper the Chairman was able to register concerns with the Planning Department with relation to the size of the barn and its possible use for an agricultural business with subsequent increased volume of heavy vehicles on a lane**

Minutes for the meeting held on 20th February 2024 continued –

not suitable for them. These concerns will remain on file should a full planning application be made.

- P/OUT/2023/06248. Mansfield Farm West Orchard. Erection of agricultural workers' dwelling (outline application to determine access and layout only). Closed 15th February 2024. **No objections were raised.**

235. Parish updates:

- East Orchard: Nothing further to report.
- Margaret Marsh: Nothing further to report.
- West Orchard: Cllr N McCombe was unable to attend the meeting and the Chairman had not received an update.

236. Finance:

a. To Receive and sign Bank Reconciliation to 31st January 2024: The Bank Reconciliation was checked against the bank statement and signed by The Chairman and the Clerk.

b. To approve the following payments: The Chairman requested items (i) to (iv) be approved initially.

- (i) Manston Hall Hire £18
- (ii) DAPTC New Councillor Induction £54
- (iii) Clerk's Salary £550.56
- (iv) Clerk's Expenses £57.06

Cllr J Martin proposed **“that the payments totalling £679.62 should be approved”** Cllr Mrs V Stokes seconded and the vote was unanimous.

- (v) Parish Warden expenses: East Orchard Mr I Faulkner (£75)
Margaret Marsh Cllr V Stokes (£75)
West Orchard Cllr N McCombe (£75)

Cllr G Stokes proposed **“that the payments totalling £225.00 should be approved”** Cllr J Martin seconded and the vote was unanimous.

The Clerk requested the Councillors approve payment to the payroll provider – AOS Ltd of £240. £80 for 23/24 and £180 for 24/25.

Cllr G Stokes proposed **“that the payment of £240.00 should be approved”** Cllr J Martin seconded and the vote was unanimous.

c. To consider Section 137 Grant awards: (Total £250). The Chairman reminded Councillors the Grant awards last year were made to The Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and Children with Cancer UK Charity. The Councillors discussed possible charities and recommended that grants be awarded to the same two organisations. Cllr J Martin proposed **“that a Grant award of £125 should be made to Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance”**. Cllr Mrs V Stokes seconded and the vote was unanimous. Cllr G Stokes proposed **“that a Grant award of £125 should be made to Children with Cancer UK Charity”**. Cllr J Martin seconded and the vote was unanimous.

d. To confirm arrangements for the Internal Audit: The Clerk confirmed that Mrs N Phillips has agreed to carry out the internal audit again this year. The Councillors present unanimously approved the auditor appointment by email following the meeting.

Minutes for the meeting held on 20th February 2024 continued –

237. Clerk’s Business:

- Payroll Provider Appointed: see minute 229 of these minutes.
- Precept: The Clerk confirmed the precept request of £3284 has been accepted by Dorset Council.

238. Correspondence: Carbon Literacy Courses Cllr B Bawden. The Clerk reported she had sent details of the courses to the Chairman. The courses were not considered relevant at this stage.

239. Chairman’s Update and Matters Pertinent:

- The Chairman reported he had received details from Mrs Stranger of a fund which originally was allocated by the Diocese from the sale of the local school building. The funds have to be used for the Church of St Luke. He confirmed that he did not know the value of the fund or any further details but was just raising awareness of the existence of it. Any further enquiries should be made to the PCC.
- He thanked Cllr Mrs C Stokes for her contribution and commitment to the Parish Council during her many years as a Councillor and for her support to him in his role as Chair.
- He reminded the Councillors that he will not be standing in the May election and provided them with handover notes and a file of the PC work during his time as Chairman. He thanked them and the Clerk for their support to him and their commitment to the PC.
- D Day Anniversary – The Chairman reminded the Councillors that the D-Day anniversary is 6th June 2024.

Cllr Mrs V Stokes thanked The Chairman for his support and for being a good Chairman to the Parish Council. The sentiment was echoed by all attending the meeting; the Chairman received a round of applause and many comments of appreciation.

Date of next meeting: 13th May 2024.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Signed _____ Chairman Date_____

Parish Council information available on: <http://www.theorchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.org.uk/>

Please report issues regarding highways and footpaths to Dorset Council: Dorset Council

Website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/>

Rosanne Jacques: Clerk to the Parish Council email: clerk@theorchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.org.uk