



Minutes of the Meeting of Corfe Mullen Town Council
held on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 19:22 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall

Present:

Councillors
D Sowry-House (Chair)
A Craven
D Everett
S Florek
A Holland
P Holland
B Honeyman
S Jefferies
J Lortie
D Mattocks
P Neil
P Purvis
J Stennett

In Attendance: Catherine Horsley (Town Clerk & RFO)
Rachel Virrill (Deputy Town Clerk – minute taker)

Public Participation

There were 4 members of the public present, two of whom wished to speak.

The members of the public spoke relating to the recent vandalism of the memorial bench in the New Cemetery which was fundraised by family and friends and placed in the cemetery for their late brother and friend who had died in 1996, along with 3 other young people from Corfe Mullen.

The Chair thanked the members of the public for their representation and opened the meeting.

TC 23/223 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hardy, who was unable to attend due to a prior commitment. Members sought clarification on the prior commitment in order to accept apologies.

TC 23/224 To Record any declarations of interest Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

Cllr Craven declared a non-pecuniary interest relating to the proposed capital expenditure budget for bus shelters, due to a family members request for a new bus shelter at Windgreen on Wareham Road.

TC 23/225 Paper A – To Approve minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 4 January 2024 – LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Craven', is located at the bottom right of the page.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2024 were **APPROVED**, subject to spelling correction of Cllr Mattocks surname on page 4.

The Chair brought forward agenda items TC 23/232 and TC 23/233 and suspended Standing Orders in order for the members of the public attending regarding the vandalised memorial bench in the New Cemetery to be part of the discussion.

TC 23/232 Paper H – To Note Recent Acts of Vandalism on Town Council Sites

The Clerk presented the report, noting the disappointment at the vandalism currently being experienced across Town Council sites and the costs to the Town Council to either repair or replace along with man hours to resolve these issues.

Members noted their disappointment at the vandalism and discussed the regular vandalism at the Recreation Ground public toilets. While they acknowledged that consideration may have to be given to closing the toilets permanently if the vandalism continued, it was felt that reducing the opening hours to daylight hours, currently 8am until 4pm, should be trialled.

Members felt the information should be in the public domain to demonstrate the costs to the Town Council and the effect on the Town Councils finances and ultimately the precept, which is funded by those who pay Council Tax.

The Clerk agreed to regularly report acts of vandalism to the Full Council.

The update was **NOTED**.

It was **RESOLVED** to reduce the Recreation Ground public toilet opening times to daylight hours on a trial basis to be revisited at the Full Council meeting on 26 March 2024.

TC 23/233 Paper I – To Consider and Agree Bench Options for Street Furniture Policy

Cllr Craven presented the report with options available to replace the existing street furniture benches with a more robust design to deter vandalism.

The options presented would be made by the Village Hall Caretaker/Handyman, who was a trained carpenter, all made from solid oak sleepers with steel fixings.

Members discussed all options and their future durability and felt option 1, was the most robust. Members also recognised the importance of memorial benches and the added amenity within the community and agreed the Town Council should cover the cost of replacing the vandalised bench.

The members of the public felt a cast iron bench would be a more robust option and require less maintenance. However, were grateful to the Town Council for involving them in the discussion and agreeing to replace the bench, which meant a lot to the family and friends of the young people who had died.

Discussion went onto the accountability to those causing the damage and how Dorset Police should follow up, when reports are made. The Clerk advised, all vandalism on Town Council sites was reported to Dorset Police 101.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** option 1 bench to be updated in the Street Furniture Policy and to progress with replacing vandalised bench at a cost for materials of circa £140 plus labour costs.

The Clerk agreed to update the Street Furniture Policy to be presented to a future Full Council meeting for approval.



The Chair thanked the 3 members of the public, who then left the meeting.

The Chair returned to the agenda items in order.

TC 23/226 Paper B - To Approve Accounts for Payment

Cllr Craven queried the following payments:

- Line 750: Was the bin a replacement and what type? The Clerk confirmed the bin replaced a general waste bin at the Recreation Ground play area with a dual general waste and recycling bin, similar to the bin located in the skate park.
- Line 726: What period did the invoice relate to? The Clerk confirmed, British Telecom invoiced quarterly in advance for the broadband lines for the Council Office and Grounds Unit.
- Line 725: Why was the Council not using a local supplier for materials? The Clerk confirmed, Bridport Building Supplies was located on the Cogdean Industrial Estate and gave a small discount to the Town Council.

Cllr Craven asked if the invoice for the recent by-election had been received. The Clerk confirmed the invoice had not been received to date, however, she had followed up with Dorset Council Electoral Services.

The accounts for payment, totalling £31,751.26 were **APPROVED**.

TC 23/227 Paper C - To Approve Bank Reconciliation for December 2023

Cllr Craven queried the expenditure for both British Telecom and Buzz Networks. The Clerk confirmed British Telecom provided the broadband lines for the Council Office and Grounds Unit and Buzz Networks provided the digital phone lines to the Council Office to enable calls to be answered from any location, particularly when working from home.

The bank reconciliation for December 2023 was **APPROVED**.

TC 23/228 Paper D – To Note the already Approved minutes of Committees:

- Finance & Administration Committee – 8 November 2023
- Planning Committee – 28 November 2023
- Planning Committee – 19 December 2023

Cllr Jefferies noted a spelling error on page 48 of the Planning Committee minutes from 19 December 2023. This would be corrected.

The already approved minutes from Committee meetings were **NOTED**.

TC 23/229 Paper E – To Receive and Note Interim Internal Audit Report

Cllr Lortie congratulated the Clerk and staff on the interim internal audit report.

The Interim Internal Audit Report was received and **NOTED**.

TC 23/230 Paper F – To Consider Items to Note or Requiring Approval

a) To approve - Mobile café at the Recreation Ground

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the request for 'Coffee Guys' to site a mobile café at the Recreation Ground on the following basis:



- Refundable deposit of £100.00 be paid to cover additional costs that may be incurred as a result of littering and/or removal of waste.
- Evidence of insurance(s) and food safety certificates to be provided prior to trading.
- Agreement to be drafted by the Clerk to be reviewed six monthly.
- Times and location of mobile café to be accessible to all, to be agreed with the Clerk.
- Council Office to provide listing of events taking place at the Recreation Ground.

b) To approve - Bus Shelters on Wareham Road by Large Co-op and Windgreen Roundabout

The Deputy Clerk presented the report, noting at this stage, the Council was agreeing to the type/style of the bus shelters. Once agreed, permission would be sought from Dorset Council Highways to install bus shelters in the agreed locations.

The Deputy Clerk reported, Dorset Council had confirmed the three bus shelter locations noted within the report, were all the responsibility of the Town Council.

Members discussed the various options and agreed the option chosen should be in line with the bus shelter previously purchased by the Town Council located on Wareham Road by Corfe View Road. The options presented did not include the installation of an electronic timetable, which members felt was important for future proofing the bus shelters.

Discussion also took place relating to the condition of the bus shelter already in situ at Windgreen and members felt if the budget allowed, this bus shelter should be replaced.

The Clerk confirmed that £11,000 had been allocated in the 2024/25 budget with an agreed programme for purchasing and installation of bus shelters over two financial years.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree in principle, subject to Externiture who supplied the bus shelter on Wareham Road by Corfe View Road providing a like for like quotation and costs being updated to include the following:

- Option 1 – heritage shelter with half-end panels
- One x 2 bay shelter with 100mm bench to be located on Wareham Road by the large Co-op at a total cost of £3145+VAT
- Two x 3 bay shelters with 200mm bench to be located on each side of Wareham Road by the Windgreen Roundabout at a total cost of £7770+VAT
- Ability to install an electronic timetable in the future
- Colour black
- Standard timetable casing included
- Town Council branding
- All costs to include delivery and installation

c) To approve - Parish Online Subscription

Members discussed the pros and cons of subscribing to Parish Online, particularly in terms of drafting the Neighbourhood Plan and Climate Change Action Plan.

The Clerk raised her concerns over the ability to maintain the database with limited office resources. Cllr Neil felt the Council should consider a university intern or volunteers to upload the data required, albeit this would be a long-term project.

The Clerk noted some of the information available on Parish Online was also available on Dorset Explorer and advised a Dorset Clerks meeting was scheduled



with the Chief Executive of Dorset Council on 13 March 2024, with Dorset Explorer as an agenda item to understand the development of the database and access by Town & Parish Councils in Dorset.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the decision to subscribe to Parish Online until following the Clerks' meeting on 13 March 2024, with an update to be provided at the Full Council meeting scheduled on 26 March 2024. Cllr Neil to invite a local user of Parish Online to present their experiences of using the database to Council.

The meeting was paused at 20:52, whilst members took a comfort break. The meeting recommenced at 20:58.

d) To approve - Content for Parish Newsletter

The Clerk presented the report, noting £6000 was allocated in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial year budgets for Parish Newsletters.

Members felt with the budget available, two newsletters should be drafted to be sent to all households in Corfe Mullen before the end of the current financial year. The first newsletter should be specific to the forthcoming elections and how to stand as a Town Councillor with the second newsletter to cover the suggestions within the report along with climate change. Cllr Neil agreed to draft some wording relating to the Neighbourhood Plan and climate change.

Cllr Jefferies noted consideration should be given to local sports clubs/team results being published in the newsletters if there was space available.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** for the Clerk to draft two newsletters and for the contractor, Mail & Print to format the newsletters at a total cost of £5801.64+VAT. The first newsletter to cover the forthcoming elections to be distributed as soon as possible.

The Clerk confirmed once the newsletters had been drafted and formatted, copies would be circulated to members for consideration, prior to distribution.

The Clerk presented the Dorset Council Area Elections Toolkit prepared by Dorset Council and Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC). A copy of the toolkit would be shared with members following the meeting.

The Chair suspended Standing Order 3x to allow the meeting to continue.

e) To approve - Utility vehicle for Grounds Team

The Clerk presented the report, noting £12,000 was allocated in the 2023/24 financial year budget for a replacement vehicle for the Grounds Team.

Members discussed the options and felt option 1 from the local John Deere main dealer was most suitable, albeit slightly over budget.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** for the Clerk to progress with purchasing gator vehicle at a total cost of £12,950+VAT, subject to the Grounds Team test driving the vehicle and confirming it was fit for purpose.

f) To approve - New Water Heater at Council Office

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** option 1, BURNSgas Limited to supply and install Ariston 15ltr 3 kw stored water heater at a total cost of £660.49+VAT.



g) To approve - Recommendation from the Planning Committee on 4 January 2024 for installation of safety barrier on Hillside Road, adjacent to Henbury View Play Area

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the recommendation from the Planning Committee for Dorset Council Highways to supply and install two broxap standard galvanised pedestrian guard rails on Hillside Road adjacent to Henbury View play area at a total cost of £1064+VAT.

h) To Retrospectively Approve - Additional Cemetery Driveway Works

It was **RESOLVED** to retrospectively **APPROVE** contractor Absolute Armour & Sons to carry out additional ground works to the Old Cemetery driveway to install drain covers to cover pipework and associated concrete at a total cost of £1245+VAT.

i) To Note - Recreation Ground Outdoor Gym Equipment

The Deputy Clerk presented the report, noting the recent site visit with the agreed contractor, Fresh Air Fitness and two grant applications being progressed.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 23/231 Paper G – To Approve locations in Corfe Mullen to be registered as Community Assets

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** nominating the following locations in Corfe Mullen as Assets of Community Value:

1. The 'Pound' at the top of Pardy's Hill/Blandford Road
2. County Field, Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground
3. Corfe Mullen Library
4. Lambs Green Pub, Lambs Green Inn Lane
5. Dorset Soldier Pub, Wareham Road

TC 23/234 Verbal – To Note any updates from Representatives to Outside Bodies

Cllr Jefferies confirmed there were no further updates regarding the Beacon Hill Landfill site.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 23/235 Verbal - To Note the update from the Climate Change Working Party – Cllr P Neil

Cllr Neil reported the working party were progressing with the action plan, albeit slow progress had been made, due a reduction in members. It was noted the purchasing and installation of additional bus shelters was positive, as this may encourage more users of public transport.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 23/236 Verbal – To Note Clerk's Update

The Clerk provided an update as follows:



- Met with two representatives from AECOM on 10 January 2024, to discuss the updates required to the draft Design Guidance and Codes report. The Clerk confirmed AECOM were updating the draft report, albeit not all recommended updates would not be completed until the Neighbourhood Plan works recommenced and further grant funding was available to revisit the report.
- Registration with the Charity Commission relating to the transfer of Trustee of the Corfe Mullen Sports Association (CMSA) to the Town Council was in progress.
- The Grounds Team roles, Youth Support Worker and Keyholder for the Village Hall job vacancies had been advertised with the closing date of 16 February 2024. Interviews to take place w/c 26 February 2024.
- Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan was out to public consultation, with a deadline to feedback comments by 1 March 2024.
- Invites had been accepted by the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and a resident who conducts metal detecting at the Recreation Ground to present at the Annual Parish meeting scheduled on 14 March 2024.
- Contact had been made with National Highways relating to the increased signage on the A31 for the Alpaca Farm.
- Engagement for the Local Transport Plan (Version 4) commenced on 22 January 2024 for 6 weeks, to shape the plan for the next 10-15 years across Dorset and BCP Council areas.
- Attended virtual meeting with Chief Executive of Dorset Council, where an update was provided on the Devolution deal with BCP, Wiltshire, Somerset and North Somerset Councils which was at the start of the process.
- Community Asset Transfer updated policy was being presented to the Cabinet at Dorset Council in January 2024.
- Second Homes Council Tax policy was being presented to the Cabinet at Dorset Council in February 2024. It was anticipated the benefits to Dorset Council would be circa £6m, albeit exemptions were still unknown.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 23/237 Verbal – To Note Mayor’s Report

The Mayor advised he would provide an update at the next meeting.

TC 23/238 Verbal - To Note Dorset Councillors Update

No update was provided. However, the Chair requested that the Leader of Dorset Council was made aware of the non-attendance of the Dorset Councillors, particularly to the Planning Committee where a contentious planning application was discussed.

TC 23/239 Verbal – Matters for Forthcoming Agendas No decisions can be taken¹

An invite to be sent to Virgin Media to present to Full Council on their work currently being undertaken in the village to install fibre network.

TC 23/240 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – Tuesday 27 February 2024 at 19:00 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

TC 23/241 To Resolve to exclude members of the press and public – to agree that agenda item TC 23/242 be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

¹ Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business which are not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119)

The one remaining member of the public left the meeting.

TC 23/242 Paper J – To Note Correspondence from Early Years Provider, Mini Munchkins

The Clerk presented the report, noting the concerns raised by Mini Munchkins relating to the increase in Pavilion lounge hire fees and the impact on their business along with the Government funding for over 2-year-olds and minimum wage increases effective from 1 April 2024.

The Clerk reiterated, in line with Standing Orders 7a & b, a resolution shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion requiring written notice by at least 5 councillors to the Clerk or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee/sub-committee.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 23/243 Close of meeting at 21:55.

Signed as a correct record of the meeting  Date 27-2-24