



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Corfe Mullen Town Council
held on Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 19:00 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall**

Present: **Councillors**
D Sowry-House (Chair)
J Bonham
A Craven
S Florek
L Hardy
A Holland
P Holland
S Jefferies
J Lortie
P Neil
V Papilio

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

Public Participation

There were two members of the public present, who were in attendance to understand the Town Council's priorities over their next five-year term and to request an improvement to pavements within the Parish.

Cllr Sowry-House welcomed all members to the annual meeting of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year. (Local Government Act 1972 s.15(4)).

TC 24/01 To Elect Chairman/Mayor of the Town Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25
(Local Government Act 1972 s. 15(1))

Cllr Jefferies proposed Cllr Sowry-House to continue as Chair/Mayor of the Town Council for the 2024/25 municipal year to provide continuity during the first year of the newly elected Council. This was seconded by Cllr Papilio.

Cllr Lortie proposed Cllr Craven due to his consistent approach to the Councils finances. Cllr Craven thanked Cllr Lortie for the proposal, however, declined due to being unable to dedicate the time required to the role.

Cllr Hardy proposed Cllr Lortie for equality of the Council. Cllr Lortie thanked Cllr Hardy for the proposal, however, felt she was unable to take up the role for the first year of the newly elected Council.

Members voted for Cllr Sowry-House to continue as Chair for the 2024/25 municipal year, with 10 members voting in favour, with one abstention, Cllr Sowry-House.

Cllr Sowry-House accepted the position.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Sowry-House be elected as Chair/Mayor of Corfe Mullen Town Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.

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

Cllr Sowry-House signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the end of the meeting. Local Government Act 1972 s.83(4)

TC 24/02 To Elect Vice Chairman/Deputy Mayor of the Town Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25 (Local Government Act 1972 s. 15(6))

Cllr Craven proposed Cllr Neil as Vice-Chair/Deputy Mayor of the Town Council for the 2024/25 municipal year to take forward the good work already started relating to the Neighbourhood Plan and climate change and environmental issues affecting the Parish. This was seconded by Cllr P Holland.

Ten members voted in favour, with one abstention Cllr Neil.

Cllr Neil accepted the position.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Neil be elected Vice-Chair/Deputy Mayor of Corfe Mullen Town Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Cllr Neil signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the end of the meeting.

TC 24/03 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

There were no apologies for absence.

TC 24/04 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)

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 24/05 Paper A - To Approve minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23 April 2024 (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2024 were **APPROVED**.

TC 24/06 Paper B - To Approve Accounts for Payment

Cllr Jefferies raised the following query:

Lines 149-155: Water invoices appeared high, particularly the allotments. The Clerk advised the water supplier had changed at the beginning of the financial year with the first invoices for estimated usage. Meter readings had been submitted; therefore, future invoices would be charged based on actual usage. It was also noted invoices were issued monthly rather than half-yearly as previously.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the accounts for payment totalling £12,283.95.

TC 24/07 Paper C - To Appoint Committee Members for the Municipal Year 2024/25

Members discussed the membership of the Committees for the 2024/25 municipal year, noting the Terms of Reference should state the maximum number of members rather than minimum, with 5 for the Staffing Committee, and 8 for the remaining Committees. The Chair of the Council to be a standing member on each Committee.

The Clerk noted consideration should be given to places remaining available on each Committee for new Councillors following the co-option process to fill the three

vacancies, albeit the quorum for each Committee meeting shall be no less than three in line with Standing Order 4viii.

It was agreed the Committee membership for the 2024/25 municipal year was as follows:

Planning & Highways Committee:

Cllr J Bonham
Cllr S Florek
Cllr L Hardy
Cllr A Holland
Cllr P Neil
Cllr V Papilio
Cllr D Sowry-House

Community Services Committee:

Cllr A Craven
Cllr P Holland
Cllr S Jefferies
Cllr J Lortie
Cllr Papilio
Cllr D Sowry-House

Finance & Administration Committee:

Cllr A Craven
Cllr S Florek
Cllr L Hardy
Cllr J Lortie
Cllr V Papilio
Cllr D Sowry-House

Staffing Committee:

Cllr S Florek
Cllr P Holland
Cllr S Jefferies
Cllr D Sowry-House

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the membership of the Committees as listed for the 2024/25 municipal year.

TC 24/08 Paper D - To Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies and Arrangements for Reporting Back

Members discussed the appointment of representatives to outside bodies and arrangements for reporting back, as follows:

DAPTC Eastern Area Committee:

Cllr S Jefferies
Cllr L Hardy

Beacon Hill Liaison Sub-Committee:

Cllr S Jefferies

DAPTC Towns & Larger Parishes Committee:

Cllr P Neil
Cllr J Lortie

Corfe Mullen Allotment Association:

Cllr D Sowry-House

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the representatives to outside bodies as listed for the 2024/25 municipal year.

TC 24/09 Paper E – To Agree to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

The Clerk read out the Civility and Respect Pledge to reiterate what the Council would be agreeing to, by signing the pledge.

It was **RESOLVED** for the newly elected Council to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

TC 24/10 Paper F - Review of Terms of Reference for Committees

The Clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the Committees Terms of References'.



Cllr Sowry-House noted the Planning Committee had historically been named the Planning & Highways Committee and suggested re-adopting the name due to highways issues being discussed as part of the agenda.

Cllr A Holland noted a formatting error. The Clerk confirmed this would be corrected prior to publishing on the website.

It was **RESOLVED** to rename the Planning Committee as the Planning & Highways Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Terms of References for the Committees of the Council, subject to updates noted.

TC 24/11 Paper G - Review and Adoption of Standing Orders

The Clerk presented the report, noting the Standing Orders had been reviewed in line with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Standing Orders for England, version 2 dated April 2022 with updates as follows:

- 3t – Meetings Generally: disclosable pecuniary interest wording.
- 12e – Draft Minutes: to reflect draft minutes published on the Council website no later than 10 working days following the meeting.
- 13i – Code of Conduct and Dispensations: new addition.
- 14d – Code of Conduct Complaints: new addition.
- 15bi (bullet points) – Proper Officer: consent to serve Councillors by email including summons, agendas, and papers.
- 5xxi – Ordinary Council Meetings: calendar of meetings for following calendar year, not municipal year.
- 18av. & c – Financial Controls and Procurement: should reflect the updated Financial Regulations for contracts for the supply of goods, services or works to the value of £30,000 including VAT not £25,000+VAT as stated.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Standing Orders, subject to the updates noted.

TC 24/12 Paper H - Review and Adoption of Financial Regulations

The Clerk presented the report, noting the Financial Regulations had been reviewed in line with the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide dated March 2024 and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) updated Model Financial Regulations for England dated April 2024.

The Clerk also noted the budgetary control and authority to spend on page 2 of the covers sheet should read: Authorised spending limit for Clerk for any items below £500 (previously £100), the Clerk and the Chair of the Council up to £2000 (previously £1000).

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Financial Regulations, subject to the updates noted.

TC 24/13 Paper I - Review of Inventory of Land and Other Assets Including Buildings and Office and Grounds Maintenance Equipment

The Clerk presented the report, noting the recommendation from the recent internal audit report to only list items with a value over £250 in line with JPAG Practitioners Guide. The Clerk confirmed this methodology would be used going forward.

Cllr Florek asked what the byelaw signs refer to. The Clerk confirmed the byelaws for the Parish were approved by the Secretary of State in October 1985, with a sign on each Town Council site stating what could/could not take place on the sites.

Cllr Hardy queried the differing costs of the welcome to village signs. The Clerk confirmed the value of the signs totalling £1700 was the cost of the original signs purchased in 2003 with £141.89 dated September 2022, being the cost to replace the stolen sign by the Lake Gates roundabout/Willett Road.

The Asset Register was **REVIEWED** and **NOTED**.

TC 24/14 Paper J - Confirmation of Arrangements for Insurance Cover in Respect of all Insurable Risks

The arrangements of insurance cover for all insurable risks were **REVIEWED** and **NOTED**.

TC 24/15 Paper K - Annual Calendar of Meetings 2025

The Clerk presented the report, noting the start times for Community Services and Finance & Administration Committee meetings should read 19:00 rather than 18:30 as stated.

Members discussed the dates for the Annual General Meetings of the Village Hall and Youth Trust Charities and felt the meetings should be held virtually following the school summer holidays.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the annual calendar of meetings for 2025, subject to updates noted.

TC 24/16 Paper L – To Appoint Internal Auditor for 2024/25 Financial Year

The Clerk presented the report, noting the current Internal Auditor had been in place for more than 12 years.

Best practice guidance recommends reviewing appointment of the Internal Auditor at least every 5 years to ensure added value and improve Councils operations, albeit there was no requirement to rotate auditors. However, the independence of the appointed person/firm should be reviewed annually relating to personal, financial and professional independence.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor, Tim Light, Lightatouch, for the financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 at a total cost of £1600 excluding VAT.

It was further **RESOLVED** to send a letter to Eleanor Greene, Do the Numbers Ltd thanking her for her diligence and service to the Council over the past 12 years.

TC 24/17 Paper M – To Declare Eligibility to Exercise the Use of the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 s.1)

The Clerk confirmed the Council met the two criteria for eligibility for the General Power of Competence by having 11 elected members, more than two thirds elected members and a qualified Clerk who completed the CiLCA qualification in July 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** to **DECLARE** eligibility to exercise the use of the General Power of Competence.



TC 24/18 Paper N – To Approve Scheme of Delegation Arrangements

The Clerk presented the report, noting the new policy provided clarity on the delegated arrangements of the Council to Committees and Officers.

Cllr Hardy queried point 2.2.2, stating the Proper Officer was specifically authorised to receive declarations of acceptance of office, and asked if there should be a counter point noting to 'receive resignations from office'.

The Clerk confirmed under statute, the Local Government Act 1972 s.84(1c), members resignations should be received by the Chair of the Council not the Clerk.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Scheme of Delegation arrangements.

TC 24/19 Matters for Forthcoming Agendas No decisions can be taken¹

The following items were noted:

- Dorset Council Ward Councillors to follow up response previously received relating to siting of bus shelters on Wareham Road at Windgreen.
- Respectful use of the chapel in the old cemetery to generate income.
- Installation of solar panels on Town Council buildings.
- Dorset Council asset transfer of the county field at the Recreation Ground.
- Sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Become a Rights Respecting Council and Community.
- Councillor Surgeries/Drop-ins.
- Adopt and focus on four annual campaigns following feedback from electorates at Councillor Drop-ins.
- Approval of the Council's and/or Staff Subscriptions to Other Bodies, Complaints Procedures, Policies, Procedures and Practices in respect of obligations under Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislation, Press/Media Policy and Employment Policies and Procedures.
- Dorset Council Ward Councillor to follow up progress update on the Beacon Hill landfill site.

The Chair, as one of the newly elected Dorset Council Ward Councillors, to provide Dorset Council updates to the Clerk in real-time to disseminate to members rather than waiting to a Full Council meeting. Cllr Florek and the Chair were taking part in all Dorset Council training and introducing themselves to officers at County Hall in Dorchester, in order to build relationships and communications for the benefit of the Town Council and the community.

Discussion took place relating to the county field which had been earmarked for development of a new school in the current adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan, and Dorset Councils view on providing education across Dorset.

Cllr Craven queried if the trigger for a by-election was set by Dorset Council or in statute. The Clerk confirmed the requirement for ten residents to request a by-election was in statute, under section 5 of the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006. The Clerk reported she had been liaising with DAPTC relating to the by-election costs in November 2023 and would report back any updates to a future meeting.

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)

Cllr Hardy noted the difficulties for new members awareness of the Councils ongoing and future projects and requested that as part of the new website, this information was made available. The Clerk advised an Annual Action Plan was being developed, which would assist new members and members of the public's awareness of the Councils projects and how the precept was being spent.

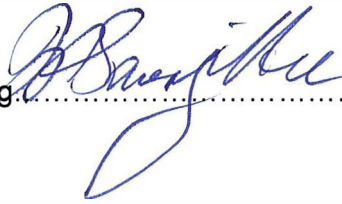
Cllr Lortie congratulated Cllrs Sowry-House and Florek on becoming the newly elected Dorset Council Ward Councillors for Corfe Mullen.

It was agreed to send the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2023 and 2024 to all members following the meeting.

TC 24/20 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – Tuesday 28 May 2024 at 19:00 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

TC 24/21 Close of meeting at 20:08.

Signed as a correct record of the meeting.....



Date

28-5-24

