



Minutes of the Meeting of Corfe Mullen Town Council
held on Tuesday 28 January 2025 at 19:16 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall

Present: **Councillors**
D Sowry-House (Chair)
A Craven
P Cuckston
S Florek
L Hardy
S Jefferies
A Joyce
J Lortie
P Neil
P Purvis

In Attendance: Catherine Horsley (Town Clerk)
Daryl Pearce (Deputy Town Clerk) - Minute Taker
Sargent Payne, Local Neighbourhood Policing Team (agenda item TC 24/327 only)

TC 24/312 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs A and P Holland due to personal circumstances, Cllr Bonham who had a prior commitment and Cllr Papilio who was unwell.

TC 24/313 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 24/314 Paper A – To Approve minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 7 January 2025 – LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2025.

TC 24/315 Paper B – To Approve Accounts for Payment

Members raised the following queries:

- Line 940: How much did a new brushcutter cost in comparison to the annual service costs. The Deputy Clerk confirmed to purchase new, the cost would be considerably higher.
- Lines 926-927: What period did the invoices relate to. The Clerk confirmed line 926 covered the period 10 March 2024 – 7 October 2024 and line 927, the 8 October 2024 – 6 January 2025. It was noted the validation of invoices received from the Scouts against the meter readings had been carried out, with the Scouts changing energy provider to a more competitive rate per unit and standing charge.
- Line 924: The service costs appeared high. The Clerk confirmed this was the first service since purchasing the vehicle in February 2024, with the costs

approved by Full Council at their meeting held on 17 December 2024. The Deputy Clerk advised, some of the costs related to repairs and/or maintenance that were unknown at the time the vehicle was purchased.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the accounts for payment totalling £34,737.47.

TC 24/316 Paper C – To Approve Bank Reconciliation for December 2024

Members raised the following queries:

- Lines 783 & 785: Why were there two payment lines for Initio Learning Trust. The Clerk confirmed the Lockyers Hub rent was paid in two instalments during the financial year.
- Lines 291, 315, 316, and 317: Why were there multiple receipt lines for Corfe Mullen Lawn Tennis Club. The Clerk confirmed she had liaised with Scribe, the Councils accounting software provider to find a fix, due to converting sports bookings to invoices with a zero value.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation for December 2024.

TC 24/317 Paper D – To Note the Already Approved minutes of Committees:

- Finance & Administration Committee – 19 November 2024
- Planning & Highways Committee – 26 November 2024

The already approved minutes of committee meetings were **NOTED**.

TC 24/318 Paper E – To Approve Recommendations from the Finance & Administration Committee

The Clerk presented the report, noting the following comments:

- **Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2024:** Due to the timing of the Finance & Administration Committee, the budget monitoring report was not available. The Clerk reported there was a predicted underspend up to 31 December 2024, relating to employees' salaries, recreation costs, higher than anticipated bank interest, sports provision and pavilion lounge income. Increased expenditure was due in Quarter 4 2024/25 for outstanding exceptional and capital work item costs.

The Town Council was in a strong financial position up to 31 December 2024. However, the Council's general reserves were at the higher limit of the recommended amount to hold of between 3-6 months operating costs.

- **Draft Budget and Precept for the 2025/26 financial year:** Recommendation to Full Council to approve setting the Corfe Mullen Town Council annual budget for 2025/26 financial year at £699,663.00 and set the precept at £609,663.00, an increase of 8.15%, which would see a Band D property increasing from £138.64 to £149.94 per annum with £90,000 of general reserves used to reduce the deficit.

The Clerk advised at the previous Full Council meeting held on 7 January 2025 following the Finance & Administration Committee meeting, the Full Council approved the recommendation to set the Corfe Mullen Town Council annual budget for 2025/26 financial year at £699,663.00. However, the recommendation for setting the precept was not approved, with Full Council approving to set the precept at £619,525.59, an increase of 9.90%, which would see a Band D property

increasing from £138.64 to £152.37 per annum with £80,137.41 reserves to be used to reduce the deficit.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the recommendations from the Finance & Administration Committee

TC 24/319 Verbal – To Note Update on Redesign of Town Council Website

The Clerk provided an update as follows:

- New website was scheduled to go live on 27 February 2025.
- Staff training scheduled on 5 February 2025.
- 30 days' notice period provided to the current website provider.
- First year costs £2977.60+VAT including redesign and annual subscription, content transfer, 10-year data download, quarterly compliance scan, e-form module and planning portal.
- Second year/annual costs £748+VAT including annual subscription, quarterly compliance scan, e-form module and planning portal.

It was noted the launch of the new website should be promoted on the Council's social media.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 24/320 Paper F - To Consider Items for Approval

The Clerk presented the report, with members discussing and voting on each item in turn. Members comments were noted as follows:

- **Purchasing of Replacement Civic Regalia:** All options for the Mayors Consort pendant, Past Mayors pendant and bespoke title badges were considered against the importance of civic pride and legacy of the Town Council along with expenditure within the allocated budget for civic regalia of £2500. The Clerk confirmed, should members agree to proceed with replacing civic regalia, a wearing of civic regalia protocol to be drafted.
- **Installation of Tarmac Entrance to the Allotment Site:** It was felt the quotation did not provide value for money to taxpayers and therefore it was agreed not to proceed, albeit potholes and uneven surfacing at the entrance to the site to be infilled with hoggin at the same time as the car parks and driveway later in the year.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following:

- a) **Purchasing of Trailer Accessories:** purchase and installation of 4ft ramp tailgate and WG84 mesh side kit at a total cost of £700+VAT.
- b) **Purchasing of Replacement Civic Regalia:** Mayors Pendant - £1746.04+VAT, Mayors Consort Pendant (option 1 – plain bar) - £1085.80+VAT and Bespoke Title Badges for the Deputy Mayor & Consort and Past Mayor - £287.19+VAT. Total cost of £3119.03+VAT.
- c) **Installation of Tarmac Entrance to the Allotment Site:** Not proceeded with.
- d) **Upgrade of Telecommunications:** Option 1, Newburgh Networks Ltd for 12 months to upgrade the Council Office including the Village Hall and Grounds Unit phones/broadband at a total cost of £4732+VAT in readiness for the digital switchover in Dorset during 2025.
- e) **Servicing of Ride on Mower:** Christchurch Garden Machinery to carry out annual servicing of both ride on mowers at a total estimated cost: £1000+VAT.
- f) **Repairs to Gator Vehicle following Annual Service:** Hunt Forest Group to carry out repairs at a total cost: £1746.30+VAT.

- g) **Purchasing and installation of fencing around the Christmas Tree at Windgreen:** Option 1, Dorset Fencing Centre to supply materials for the Grounds Team to install a half round rail fence with wire mesh at a total cost of £173.37+VAT.
- h) **Purchasing of Folding Tables for the Sports Pavilion Lounge:** Purchase 6 large beech folding tables (1520mm x 760mm) at a total cost of £907.08+VAT.

TC 24/321 Paper G – To Consider and Approve Flag Flying Policy

The Clerk presented the report, noting the recommendation to fly the Union Flag as the default flag and to seek approval to purchase flags and training of staff members responsible for flying flags due to working at height.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following:

- Adopt Flag Flying Policy.
- Purchasing of the Union Flag, St George Flag, Commonwealth Flag and the Dorset Flag at a total cost of £187.46+VAT.
- Working at height & safe use of ladders training at a total cost of £605+VAT.

TC 24/322 Paper H – To Consider and Approve use of electronic communication – Instagram

The Clerk presented the report, noting should members approve use of electronic communication Instagram, the Electronic Communications Policy would need to be updated.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** establishing a Town Council Instagram profile as a method of electronic communications.

TC 24/323 Paper I – To Consider Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Consultation on Standards in Public Life and Conduct

The Clerk presented the report, noting Town and Parish Councils as well as individual members were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** for the Clerk to respond to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Consultation on Standards in Public Life and Conduct on behalf of the Town Council with members making a representation should they wish.

TC 24/324 Paper J – To Consider the Town Council having a Stall at Corfe Mullen Carnival in June 2025

The Clerk presented the report, noting the opportunity for community engagement and a presence at Corfe Mullen Carnival to promote the work of the Council including upcoming projects relating to the relaunch of the Neighbourhood Plan and public consultation for the redevelopment of the Sports Pavilion and Recreation Ground.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following:

- Apply for a stall at Corfe Mullen Carnival at a total cost of circa £15-£30, dependant on stall category applicable to the Council.
- To purchase option 1, heavy duty gazebo at a total cost of £364.00 inc VAT.

TC 24/325 Paper K – To Consider Request from Corfe Mullen Carnival Committee

The Clerk presented the report, noting similar requests from Corfe Mullen Cricket Club and Corfe Mullen Juniors Football Club were previously approved and consideration of regular sports hirers of the Sports Pavilion at the weekends. Members felt it was important to prioritise regular sports users.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** in principle, the request from Corfe Mullen Carnival Committee to hold their 'thank you' event at Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground subject to liaison with the regular sports hirers, namely Corfe Mullen Cricket Club and Corfe Mullen Lawn Tennis Club on Sunday 20 July 2025 during the afternoon, exact times to be confirmed, usage of Sports Pavilion lounge and prep area, at the usual room hire rate of £15.50 per hour with a refundable damage deposit of £250.00.

TC 24/326 Paper L – To Consider Request from Local Artist to exhibit 'For King And Country Portrait Project' in the Village Hall to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War II

The Clerk presented the report, noting the local artist would like to hold an art exhibition to bring the community together to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War II in the main hall of Corfe Mullen Village Hall free of charge and was seeking members approval to proceed.

The Clerk also noted, the Council had allocated £500 in the 2024/25 financial year budget to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War II, which could be utilised to cover associated costs for the art exhibition.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** in principle, to hold an art exhibition in the main hall of Corfe Mullen Village Hall and for the Clerk to liaise with the local artist, Nel Brook to obtain further information on the exact requirements.

TC 24/327 Paper M – To Agree How to Proceed with Councillor Coffee Meetings

The Clerk presented the report, noting the Council's commitment to community engagement and to seek members approval on how to proceed with Councillor coffee mornings from February 2025. It was also noted the lounge in the main hall of the Village Hall was the preferred venue, as it had better visibility; however, the Clerk informed members it was only available for hire on Monday mornings between the hours of 9am-2pm.

Members highlighted the importance of hosting community events for residents, particularly those seeking companionship to combat loneliness and/or a warm space and felt promotion should be of coffee mornings, rather than Councillor coffee mornings, albeit members would be in attendance on a rota basis. Invites to be sent to local community organisations to also be involved.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** to continue holding coffee mornings in the lounge area of the main hall in Village Hall on from 3 February 2025 until 24 March 2025 from 10am – 1pm.

The Chair welcomed Sargent Payne to the meeting to provide an update on his teams work within the community.

TC 24/328 Paper N – To Note Update on Vandalism and Anti-Social Behaviour on Town Council Sites

Sargent Payne reported the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team had been working with Dorset Council, both Co-op's and Windgreen Service Station relating to anti-

social behaviour and criminal offences in Corfe Mullen. As a result, two offenders were being dealt with through the community consequences scheme along with several well being letters sent to parents.

CCTV located on Wareham Road adjacent to Corfe Mullen library continues to be monitored, due to youths congregating outside the library and causing criminal damage.

Team continues to attend sites where possible, where youths congregate including the Cemeteries and Recreation Ground.

Finally, a pop-up event was scheduled on Saturday 1 March 2025 in conjunction with Corfe Mullen Homewatch outside the Towers Way Co-op between 12-2pm to provide advice relating to vehicle theft, tool marking and shed security.

The Chair thanked Sargent Payne for the update.

The Clerk provided an update on the recent criminal damage to the Recreation Ground public toilets and subsequent closure due to damage caused to the external doors and locking mechanism. It was noted the Deputy Clerk was obtaining quotations for replacement doors to be presented at the next Community Services Committee meeting scheduled on 11 February 2025.

The verbal update was **NOTED**.

Sargent Payne left the meeting. At 21:15, the Chair Suspended Standing Order 3w to enable the meeting to continue.

TC 24/329 Verbal – To Note any updates from Representatives to Outside Bodies

Cllr Jefferies noted there was no further update relating to the work to complete the final cell at the Beacon Hill Landfill site. Cllr Neil noted the hedgerow adjacent to the site visible from Wareham Road had been severely cut-back and no longer shielded the site.

Cllr Jefferies attended a food resilience webinar on 27 January 2025, which was very interesting.

Cllr Florek attended a quarterly Dorset Council library update, whereby the Head of Dorset Council libraries was leaving, with no replacement in post. There were no current plans to cut the 18 hours library services in Corfe Mullen. It was noted, the library was offering free digital help to residents on Thursdays between 10am – 1pm, with free loan iPads.

The verbal update was **NOTED**.

TC 24/330 Verbal - To Note the update from the Climate Change Working Party

Cllr Neil advised the decreased members of the Climate Change Working Party were continuing to monitor sustainability of planning applications in Corfe Mullen.

The verbal update was **NOTED**.

TC 24/331 Paper O – To Note Update from Joint Working Party with Wimborne Minster Town Council

Cllr Purvis provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting held on 14 November 2024 and the most recent meeting held on 9 January 2025, whereby Cllr Wheeler of Wimborne Minster Town Council had drafted the document - Corfe

Mullen/Wimborne Minster route proposition for review and support of both Corfe Mullen and Wimborne Minster Town Councils to circulate to key stakeholders, local MP Vikki Slade, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

It was noted, Cllr Papilio had raised concerns with the vulnerability of wheelchair users when accessing the A31 Lake Gates Roundabout and crossing Julians Bridge. Cllr Purvis agreed to follow up at the next joint working party.

The update was **NOTED**.

It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** the Corfe Mullen/Wimborne Minster route proposition document to circulate to key stakeholders, local MP Vikki Slade, Historic England and the Environment Agency.

TC 24/332 Verbal – To Note Clerk’s Update

The Clerk provided the following update:

- Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner survey was open to seek the views of Dorset residents relating to the precept level for the 2025/26 financial year.
- Town Council as Sole Trustee of Corfe Mullen Sports Association meeting to be scheduled, date to be confirmed.
- Pony Espresso had ended their agreement to provide mobile refreshments at Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground on Saturdays with effect from 11 January 2025, due to be commercially unviable.
- Dorset Wildlife Trust had confirmed they would not be updating and/or installing replacement signs at Springdale Open Space as discussed at the Full Council meeting held on 24 November 2024.
- Concerns raised relating to the continued work of the Growing Compassionate Communities Charity for the benefit of Corfe Mullen residents.
- Community Fit & Fun Project due to commence on Wednesday 29 January 2025 in the Village Hall from 4.30-7pm.
- Unspent small grant awarded to Legs and Co totalling £3170 to be returned.
- Internal Auditor due on site on 5 February 2025.
- Advert for the role of Lead Youth Worker was live on the Town Council and Dorset Council websites along with Indeed.
- Abandoned vehicle at the Recreation Ground car park was being dealt with working alongside Dorset Council.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 24/333 Verbal – To Note Mayor’s Report

The Mayor presented a joint Mayor and Dorset Councillor report under minute no. TC 24/334.

TC 24/334 Verbal – To Note Dorset Councillor Report

Cllrs Sowry-House and Florek provided the following update:

- Attended Dorset Council Strategic & Technical Planning Committee whereby discussion took place relating to the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) at Chickerell.
- Attended Eastern Area Planning Committee, with no applications for discussion within Corfe Mullen, however, the quality of representations from Town and Parish Councils was discussed.

- Huge amount of case work, particularly flooding issues in and around the Waterloo Valley. Dorset Council IT were investigating options for managing case work via an app, due to the high level of cases in progress.
- Cllr Sowry-House to act of Vice Chair at the next Full Dorset Council meeting scheduled on 11 February 2025.
- Beryl Bikes would remain in Corfe Mullen.

The update was **NOTED**.

TC 24/335 Verbal – Matters for Forthcoming Agendas No decisions can be taken¹

There were no matters for forthcoming agendas.

TC 24/336 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 19:00 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

TC 24/337 Close of meeting at 21:55.



Signed as a correct record of the meeting.....Date 25-2-25

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)