

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
held on Thursday 5th September 2024 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

Present:

Cllr P Batstone – Vice Chair
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson
Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr C Fraser
Cllr M Jones

Cllr H Lacey - Chair
Cllr D Mantock
Cllr P Marks
Cllr J Matthews
Cllr J Rose

In Attendance: K Squire (Town Clerk) and L Plumridge by Microsoft Teams (Assistant Town Clerk).

Members of the public: 1

A minute's silence was held in respect of the late Jackie Upton King to reflect on her achievements in the Town having been heavily involved in The Exchange, the Medical Centre and Sturquest.

Minute No.	Comments
24/25/131	PUBLIC SESSION A member of the local Scout group asked if anything could be done to stop cars parking on the path adjacent to the Scout hut. The area is not a car parking space but there for the safety of pedestrians. The Clerk advised that as it is a free car park it is difficult to monitor, the Grounds Manager checks the vehicles are taxed and have a valid MOT and does as much as he can to stop illegal parking. As the car park is closed for the Cheese Festival she would see what could be done while the area is empty. Dorset Cllr C Jones had sent her apologies for the evening and had written a report which had been circulated and is attached to these minutes.
24/25/132	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE All members were present.
24/25/133	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation had been received.
24/25/134	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING The minutes of the previous Town Council meeting held on 15th August 2024, having been circulated and published prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved for signature by the Chair as a true and correct record.
24/25/135	APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS OVER £2000 There were no payments over £2000 to approve.
24/25/136	PLANNING APPLICATION Application No: P/FUL/2024/04277 Location: Butts Pond Station Road Sturminster Newton DT10 1BE Proposal: Change of use from a commercial unit to a community food hub. Enlarge window and fill in part of shutter door opening on east elevation. Observations: No Objections.



24/25/137 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk had received an email from Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Immediate Justice Dorset service which focuses on the needs of victims of ASB as well as punishing an offender, providing opportunities for restorative justice where victims can tell offenders about the impact of their crime. They wanted to use the example of the toilets in Station Road, Sturminster Newton being vandalised for training. The Council agreed this is a worthwhile project. The Town Clerk suggested she liaise with the local Police Officer to check his thoughts and if he is supportive, make contact with the organisation to help

24/25/138 **RICKETTS LANE CAR PARK**

The Clerk outlined how busy Ricketts Lane is getting on Car Meet days, the last event had over 230 cars and marshalling cars and pedestrians became difficult. The Clerk expressed her concerns for keeping pedestrians safe in the future if the event gets bigger. A solution to ease the problem would be to close Ricketts Lane car park to encourage people to park in the other car parks in town.

The Council resolved to close Ricketts Lane car park on Car Meet days from Spring 2025 and to put a notice up in advance to forewarn users of the car park.

24/25/139 **REVISED TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR HIRE OF TOWN COUNCIL OWNED OPEN SPACES**

The Clerk had just finalised revising terms and conditions for hire of Town Council owned Open Spaces and gave a summary of the amendments. She will circulate the document to Councillors for this to be reviewed at the next Town Council meeting.

24/25/140 **COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The Council discussed changing meeting nights from Thursdays.

The Council resolved to change the Town Council and Committee meetings to Wednesday nights and review after 12 months. This will take effect from January 2025.

24/25/141 **TOWN CLOCK**

The town clock needs repairing. The quote from the specialist repair and service company seems expensive and the Council discussed other options. Cllr M Jones and Cllr P Marks, who have experience in the mechanics of clocks, offered to help.

The Council resolved to accept Cllrs Jones and Marks offer, on the proviso that appropriate safety measures are in place for the removal and reinstating of the clock. More information on the weight and fixings of the clock were needed.

24/25/142 **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

Rixon Play Area – work on the new toddler area will start next week.

Planning – had made contact with Dorset Council Planning and would update on outcomes at a future meeting..

Highways – had met with Dorset Council Highways regarding areas of responsibility in town to make it easier for staff to signpost members of the public to the right departments/organisations.

Open Spaces – the working party met last week to set aims and objectives for the group. They will report to the Amenities Committee at the end of the month.

Alcohol free zones – had enquired regarding the possibility of alcohol-free zones to stamp out anti-social behaviour and been advised by Dorset Council to keep records of incidents to build up evidence of need.

Consultations – several projects require public consultation, she is working on a plan which will encompass all projects to get the greatest feedback.

Colber Bridge – the damaged brickwork is being dealt with by Dorset Council.

24/25/143 **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor did not have a report as this meeting so soon after the August Town Council.



24/25/144 **INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS**

Cllr Fraser – reported he had meet Grassbys Funeral Directors who rent the Chapel. They have plans to return the Chapel to its former state so that they can have services there. The rent also needs to be renegotiated – he will report at the next Amenities Committee.

Cllr Matthews – enquired if the Town Council could help with the Brothers Bench which had been removed from its position due to anti-social behaviour. The office have a contact and will look into what can be done to help.

Cllr P Batstone:

- The Friends of the Library are presenting an award to Michaela Knowles, who is moving away, to thank her for all she has done for the Library and the Literary Festival.
- Signs are being put up at the entrances to town to encourage people at the Cheese Festival to come into town.
- A photographic exhibition is being planned to include all North Dorset towns to help promote tourism.

Cllr D Mantock – complained about the excessive tyre pile by the garage on the A357. The Clerk will report to Environment Health.

Cllr Lacey – Mentioned the terrible state of the road sign for Ingrams. This has been reported to Dorset Council.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:41pm

Approved on Chair’s Signature

Approved on Thursday 3rd October 2024

Dorset Cllr Carole Jones - Report

I have submitted the attached motion to the next Full Council meeting in October. I think there will be extreme pressures with the rise of the energy cap again in October and the loss of the Winter Fuel payment which will affect a number of our older residents who literally just scrape through the basic allowance and who, have relied on this help. There is absolutely no doubt that there will be made older people – and indeed families who are either going to get into debt over the winter period or make difficult choices – and food is always the flexible budget.

A planning application has come in on the Clarke’s Yard site by Snooks for 2 houses on a small part of the plot, taking the space where the showroom and buildings are based, Applicant Mr Snook. A further application then came in for 28 houses on the whole of the site – applicant Stonewater, a



Housing Association. The application form states no contamination on the site? Not sure how both applications work or don't work together?

I attended a 'Big Conversation' event at Shaftesbury last week – talking to people about the current administration's priorities for Dorset Council. There is no doubt that the emphasis seems to be on Weymouth & Portland – to that end they are holding the Cabinet Meeting (normally held in the Council Chamber at Dorchester) in Weymouth next week. There is a strong feeling that North Dorset is being overlooked, and indeed a number of people made those comments. No mention of any priority of the lack of transport in North Dorset – and this was brought up again and again last week – so we have a challenge on our hands.

Works to Colber Bridge planned for week commencing 10 Sept to include structural work and decoration.

The big one.....Changes to the NPPF, there will be changes in policy and framework following the elections with the new government. The proposed changes are pretty frightening and will impact Dorset.

A consultation document has been sent to all planning authorities with 106 questions, together with a table of outcomes of new housing numbers methodology for every council in England. Some of the changes made last year are reversed, these include mandatory targets – no longer 'advisable'. A 5 year land supply is needed at all times which with the new targets will mean we will not have the 5 year land supply for a long time. Originally Dorset had identified a housing need of 30,481 houses over 17 years, but consulted on 39,285 to give flexibility. The new target likely to be imposed is 55,910. We will be making strong representation due to the amount of land that cannot be built on due to nature conservation, heathland etc. Development in the Green Belt MAY be permitted through decisions on applications. A greater emphasis is put on social rented housing rather than affordable to buy meeting the 30% required under Dorset's Local Plan – however, this is more expensive and whilst much needed could provide barriers.

Overall there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Regarding Neighbourhood plans, IF DC has a 3 year land supply the NP will carry weight.....

This is going through consultation now, but the thought is a new NPPF could be in place by the end of this year.

That's it from me – we do have some challenges ahead!

Carole



Motion to Full Council

Thursday 10 October 2024

Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance – disproportionately affecting Dorset and the Charities that support older people in poverty

The recent Government's decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Allowance to those pensioners receiving Pension Credit, despite having a fully costed plan, will mean at least 2 million pensioners across the UK, who are fractionally over the £218.15 weekly limit, will have to make difficult choices this winter, often choosing between heating and eating. Analysis shows that energy bills this winter will be the highest on record for elderly people, particularly with a near 10% increase in the cap expected in the autumn.

The demographics in Dorset with 30% over the age of 65, compared with the national average of 19%, will mean that the loss of the Winter Fuel Allowance will have a disproportionate impact on thousands of elderly and vulnerable pensioners across Dorset, in turn placing a huge additional burden on the already overstretched NHS and Adult Social Care budgets. Those who are just above the cut-off for pension credit will suffer the most and it's not fair.

To move that:

1. Dorset Council encourages those not on Pension Credit, who could be eligible to apply, to do so, offering help to complete of necessary forms, which for many could be a barrier. through a pro-active publicity campaign
2. That Dorset Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim pension credit, are protected from fuel poverty with an assurance that energy companies will treat the vulnerable by a degree of leniency with respect to energy debt.
3. That Dorset Council sign up to the 'Save Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners', petition being run nationally by Age UK.
4. That Dorset Council work with those local charities, which support the most vulnerable in our communities, offering guidance to gain access to the resources they need, particularly in support of those who qualify to benefit from the Cost-of-Living Support Fund, to help cope effectively with their heating needs during the cold Winter months.

Proposer: Cllr Carole Jones

Seconder: Cllr Spencer Flower

Assenters: Cllr Andrew Parry
Cllr Belinda Ridout
Cllr Louie O'Leary
Cllr Jane Somper
Cllr Laura Beddow
Cllr Peter Dickinson
Cllr Julie Robinson
Cllr Bill Trite
Cllr Val Potheary



Cllr Cathy Lugg
Cllr Craig Monks
Cllr Byron Quayle
Cllr Barry Goringe
Cllr Steve Murcer
Cllr Andy Skeats

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