

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

held on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

Present:

Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson
Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr C Fraser

Cllr H Lacey
Cllr D Mantock (Vice Chair)
Cllr P Marks
Cllr J Rose (Chair)

In Attendance: K Squire (Town Clerk), J Drew (Office Administrator).

Members of the Public: 10

- | Minute No. | Comments |
|-------------------|--|
| 24/25/114 | To resolve to end Confidential session started in agenda item 25/26/113 during the 13th August 2025 Town Council meeting.
This item was no longer necessary due to the Clerk taking advice confirming that confidential sessions end automatically at the end of the relevant meeting. |
| 24/25/115 | To elect a new Town Mayor following the resignation of the incumbent mayor partway through the council year, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the council's Standing Orders.
Prior to consideration of this agenda item, Cllr Mantock as acting Chair, thanked Pauline Batstone for her work as Councillor. These thanks were shared by other members of the Council.
Cllr Joe Rose was duly elected as Chair of the Council and Town Mayor until May 2026. Cllr Rose's signed acceptance of office form is included in additional documents. |
| 24/25/116 | To receive comments and questions from members of the public. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A local resident raised concerns regarding the British Legion site and asked if the Town Council have a policy for asylum accommodation.• A representative from the Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust asked about progress on works at the Mill. Report from Dorset Councillor Carole Jones – see attached. |
| 24/25/117 | Apologies for Absence.
Apologies were received from Cllr Janet Matthews and were accepted by members present. |
| 24/25/118 | To receive declarations of interests and approve any written applications for dispensations.
No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation had been received. |
| 24/25/119 | To approve the minutes of the previous Town Council meeting held on 13th August 2025.
The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 13 th August 2025, 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. |
| 24/25/120 | To consider standing Committee membership.
The Council resolved to approve the following changes – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance & Policy Committee – Cllr Matthews to leave and Cllr Lacey to be added.• Amenities Committee – Cllr Rose and Cllr Matthews to be added. |

Chair's Initials

- 24/25/121 **To consider costs for maintenance works at the Mill and condition survey.**
A report was circulated to members prior to the meeting.
The Council resolved to approve all works and Condition Survey to be completed this financial year.
Costs to be referred to the Finance & Policy Committee for a decision on where to allocate the expenditure within the budget.
- 24/25/122 **To consider service level agreement proposal from Youth Connect South West (YCSW).**
The agreement and report from the Clerk had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.
Further to the written report the Clerk explained that she had shown due diligence by:
- Approaching Mike Bennett CEO at Dorset Youth Association (DYA), a person known by the Council and involved with the Youth Hub project as a trustee of the Youth Hub CIO. To enquire about the previous quote supplied to Dorset Cllr Jones (response detailed in the written report), to invite DYA to quote for the contract (response detailed in the written report), to check credentials of YCSW as a similar specialist organisation operating in the area (response detailed in the written report), to check if any other similar organisations are known to him (No other similar specialist providers operate in the area).
 - The Clerk spoke to three other Town Councils currently using Youth Connect South West to deliver Youth provision, all recommended their services. There were no negative reports and confirmation that if sessions are ever missed due to staff sickness or bad weather then additional activities are provided to ensure 100% delivery.
 - She had checked Contracts Finder and performed an online search and could not find another similar provider in the area.
- Following full discussion:
The Council resolved to approve entering into the Service Level Agreement with Youth Connect South West as previously circulated.
- 24/25/123 **To consider HR service and agree further actions.**
This item was deferred to later in the meeting in confidential session as it includes personal and/or exempt information that would otherwise be improperly disclosed and members would feel unable to discuss the matter freely.
- 24/25/124 **To consider appointing DAPTC on a Consultancy basis to review Town Council governance.**
This item was deferred to later in the meeting in confidential session as it includes personal and/or exempt information that would otherwise be improperly disclosed and members would feel unable to discuss the matter freely.
- 24/25/125 **To receive information regarding a request for a parking permit scheme at Brinsley Court/Close.**
Council resolved to refer this back to Dorset Cllr Carole Jones, further consideration and action involves timescales, logistics and costs which Dorset Cllr Jones has not covered in her communication with the resident.
The Clerk will email to resident to explain and ask Dorset Council Highways team to contact the resident to explain the processes.
- 24/25/126 **To consider planning application P/HOU/2025/04695 South Bank, Church Street DT10 1DB**
The Council resolved to respond to application P/HOU/2025/04695 with no objections



- 25/26/127 **To approve payments over £2000.**
Payments to approve as follows:
Farnfields £2872.80 – fees relating to the lease of Unit 2 Richmar Trading Estate.
R&M Shephard £5000.00 – Sept-Dec 2025 rent of Unit 2 Richmar Trading Estate.
Prodigy IT Solutions £2510.35 – laptop for receptionist and MS security upgrade.
Redlynch Leisure £3643.20 – repairs to wetpour surface at Ricketts Lane play area.
- 25/26/128 **To receive correspondence.**
No correspondence had been received.
- 25/26/129 **To receive a report from the Town Clerk.**
The Clerk reported:
- She had written a letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the increase in drug activity in Sturminster Newton. Subsequently she received a telephone call from him and he agreed to convene a meeting to discuss the issue.
 - The weeds growing along the pavements in Green Close have been sprayed, and a street sweep is scheduled shortly.
 - The lease for Unit 2 Richmar Trading Estate has now been completed and the keys will be collected tomorrow, 4th September 2025. It was agreed that the lease should be on a full repairing basis.
 - The Clerk has contacted the Site Manager of the Market Fields site regarding the mud on the road after large vehicles leave the site. They will be asked to ensure that the road is left daily in a mud free state.
 - Enerveo have been contacted regarding the removal of flags that have been fixed to lamp posts on Bath Road and Rolls Mill. They will attend the site to attempt removal.
- 25/26/130 **To receive information from members and proposals for future business.**
Cllr Donaldson – There had been an application for tree works for Old School House, Penny Street. He had attended the Breakfast Meeting, where he had advised the staff of The Exchange to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding anti-social behaviour that has occurred there recently.
Cllr Mantock – enquired when the goal posts will be reinstated at Rixon Recreation Ground.
Cllr Cooper – is due to have a meeting with the Site Manager at the Market Fields site re: right of way access.
- Confidential Session
In exercise of the power conferred by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1(2) members of the public and press will be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted being of a confidential nature it is likely that personal and/or exempt information would otherwise be improperly disclosed and members would feel unable to discuss the matter freely.
The Council resolved to enter a confidential session.
- 25/26/123 **To consider HR service and agree further actions.**
The Council resolved not to renew the contract for HR services with Worknest.
The Council resolved to agree to renew the contract for Health & Safety support with Worknest for 3 years.
The Council resolved to investigate other HR service providers.
The Council resolved to use Rely Ltd on an ad-hoc basis.



25/26/124 **To consider appointing Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) on a Consultancy basis to review Town Council governance.**
The Council resolved to engage the services of DAPTC to review Town Council governance. Expenditure for this was approved up to £2000.

25/26/131 **Staffing Matters.**
The Clerk reported on a Staffing Matter which was noted by the Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.52pm

Approved on Chairman's Signature

Dorset Councillor Carole Jones
Report to Town Council Wed 3rd September 2025

Apologies, I am in Cornwall this week, August is generally a quiet month in terms of Dorset Council, but I can report on:

The Local Plan Consultation is underway and we are urging people to respond with their thoughts. There is a lot of anger about the numbers of houses needed. This has been mandated by the current government and it is the Council's responsibility to find sites to accommodate. The real worry is that a 'pepper potting' approach doesn't provide the infrastructure needed. Many people assume locally that we don't have school spaces or availability within GP surgeries for more appointments. In answer to these points we have plenty of spare capacity in William Barnes and the Hight School. The GP Surgery has a responsibility to cover whatever staffing is needed to cope with the population they cover. It's important to know that within the local plan areas identified for possible housing - some have been put forward by landowners but others have been identified by the Council - unbeknown to the residents who own the land - this is causing a problem. The advice is that they can withdraw the land through the consultation process.

There are officer led consultation events at Blandford and Shaftesbury. I am looking at the possibility of holding one in Stur, but as we are constrained in our area, we don't have too much to worry about. I did ask whether a stand could be made available somewhere at the Cheese Festival as this affects all residents throughout Dorset about how they want the county to look over the next 30 years - but the committee did not feel it appropriate.

My groups stand on this is that we are not in favour of this plan, it has been officer led and we have had no input into the sites identified.

There is a great deal of concern over the possible development of land between Broad Oak and Glue Hill, using over 70 acres to house huge storage type containers for carbon capture and renewable energies. This will be led by local residents and I know there will be legal challenges should this come through.
Youth Hub

I would like to question why the council is simply going for the South West option without considering DYA which is £10K cheaper per annum? Can I please suggest doing some research into Stalbridge Youth Hub which has cancelled 25% of its sessions due to staff shortages? At the least get both organisations to come and propose their offer to the TC - who is offering what activities etc?

The Family Hub is now kicking off with it's first Youth Hub with a Party Night 12th September 6-9. We are now setting up our own nights at the Hub.

