

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th MAY 2026 AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER



PRESENT:

Cllr P Batstone	Cllr D Mantock
Cllr L Cooper	Cllr P Marks
Cllr A Donaldson (Vice Chairman)	Cllr J Rose (Chairman)
Cllr C Fraser	Cllr S Trim
Cllr H Lacey	

IN ATTENDANCE:

K Squire (Town Clerk) J Drew (Office Administrator)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 4

MINUTE NO COMMENTS

- 26/27/001 To elect the Chair of the Council and Town Mayor until May 2027**
Cllr Rose was duly elected as Chair of the Council and Town Mayor until May 2027.
- 26/27/002 To witness the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chair of the Council and Town Mayor**
Cllr Rose signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chair of the Council and Town Mayor until May 2027.
- 26/27/003 To elect the Vice Chair of the Council and Deputy Town Mayor until May 2027**
Cllr Donaldson was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Council and Deputy Town Mayor until May 2027.
- 26/27/004 To receive comments and questions from members of the public**
A member of the public asked about the Council's procedures for accepting apologies from a Councillor multiple times.
A member of the public enquired about the fencing around the former Royal British Legion Clubhouse site.
- 26/27/005 To receive a report from Dorset Councillor Jones**
Written report attached to these minutes.
- 26/27/006 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr Jackson due to family illness. This apology was accepted by members.
Apologies were received from Cllr Dobson due to injury. This apology was not accepted by members.
- 26/27/007 To approve declarations of interest and written applications for dispensation**
No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation received.

26/27/008 To approve the minutes of the previous Town Council meeting held on 1st April 2026

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 1st April 2026, having been circulated and published prior to the meeting, were taken as a true and correct record and duly signed by the Chair of the Town Council.

26/27/009 To approve recommendations from the following Committees:

- **Planning & Environment Committee 18th March 2026**

The Chair of the Planning & Environment Committee reported the following recommendations:

To contact Dorset Cllr Jones to discuss highways concerns in light of future development proposed for the Rolls Mill area.

- **Planning & Environment Committee 22nd April 2026**

- The Chair of the Planning & Environment Committee reported there were no recommendations.

The Council resolved to approve the recommendations of the Planning & Environment Committee as shown above.

- **Amenities Committee 25th March 2026**

The Chair of the Amenities Committee reported the following recommendations:

- Approval of the Memorial Bench Policy
- Approval of the Memorial Tree Policy

The Council resolved to approve the recommendations of the Amenities Committee as shown above.

- **Finance & Policy Committee**

The Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee reported the following recommendations:

- Approval of the income & expenditure report as at 31st March 2026
- Approval of the balance sheet as at 31st March 2026
- Approval of the reserves report as at 31st March 2026

The Council resolved to approve the recommendations of the Finance & Policy Committee as shown above.

26/27/010 To appoint members to the Standing Committees and to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for each Committee

The Council resolved to appoint members to the Standing Committees as attached to these minutes

Committee members resolved to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee as attached to these minutes

- 26/27/011 To appoint representatives to outside bodies and review members of existing Working Groups**
The Council resolved to appoint representatives to outside bodies and reviewed members of existing Working Groups as attached to these minutes
- 26/27/012 To consider financial matters:**
- 1. Cheque signatories**
The Council resolved to approve the following members as cheque signatories.
- Cllr A Donaldson
 - Cllr C Fraser
 - Cllr H Lacey
 - Cllr J Rose
 - K Squire (Clerk)
- 2. Consider subscriptions**
The Council resolved to subscribe to the following:
- Dorset Association of Paris & Town Councils (DAPTC) Deferred to June
 - Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Approved
 - Institute of Cemetery & Crematoria Management (ICCM) Approved
 - Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Approved
 - Dorset Community Action (DCA) Approved
- 3. To approve payments over £2000**
There were no payments over £2000 to approve.
- 26/27/013 To adopt Standing Orders for 2026/2027**
The Council resolved to adopt Standing Orders for 2026/2027 as previously circulated with the meeting papers subject to the following edit:
Standing Order 4 (d)(vi): shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, allow the members of the standing committee to appoint the chair and vice chair of the standing committee;
- 26/27/014 To adopt Code of Conduct for 2026/2027**
The Council resolved to adopt the Code of Conduct for 2026/2027 as previously circulated with the meeting papers.
- 26/27/015 To adopt a Scheme of Delegation for 2026/2027**
The Council resolved to adopt a Scheme of Delegation for 2026/2027 as previously circulated with the meeting papers.
- 26/27/016 To adopt Financial Regulations for 2026/2027**
The Council resolved to adopt the Financial Regulations for 2026/2027 as previously circulated with the meeting papers.

- 26/27/017 To consider and make comment on planning applications:**
- P/PIP/2026/01968-Banbury Cross Cottage, Angers Lane, Fiddleford, DT10 2BY-Conversion of a building to create 1 no. dwelling (permission in principle)
No objection
- 26/27/018 To receive correspondence**
Performance reports had been received from South West Youth Connect and the Citizens Advice Service.
- 26/27/019 To receive a report from the Town Clerk**
The Clerk reported:
- An issue regarding access across the former Royal British Legion Club site had been brought to her attention. As the site is privately owned and Dorset Councillor Jones has been in contact with the owners and Dorset Council Officers she advised referring any further queries to Cllr Jones so as not to double up on work.
 - She reminded Councillors to check their Register of Interests forms are still up to date and let Jasmine know if they needed the link to make changes.
 - She is currently working on the paperwork for the Internal and External Audits for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return ready for the June Town Council meeting and Exercise of Public Rights.
 - She will also be bringing reports to the June meeting regarding website options and to decide on appointment of a new Internal Auditor and is reviewing the Insurance renewal.
 - She asked if everyone had received a welcome email from Flick Learning and advised that the office team are happy to support anyone who needs help with this.
- 26/27/020 To receive information from members and proposals for future business**
Cllr Lacey – Queried lack of signage at The Row where the highway is currently narrowed due to scaffolding.
Cllr Mantock – Read out a statement of resignation, not published as the statement contains confidential information. She then left the meeting at 8.25pm.
Cllr Donaldson – Had been approached about the length of time a planning application was taking to be concluded and had given appropriate contact details for Dorset Council Planning Dept.
He also made members aware of drivers trying to avoid the road closure at Shillingstone by cutting unsuccessfully down the Trailway.
Cllr Rose – Mayors report attached to these minutes.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.31pm

Chairs Signature..... Date Approved.....

A boundary review has been taking place, and two further wards will be created at the next elections. Marnhull and Stalbridge will now be separate wards as each area has grown dramatically. The Sturminster Newton Ward has grown by around 6%, but will still operate as a single-member ward. The other ward will be in the Weymouth area. Hence DC will operate with 84 elected members.

The Council is carrying out a series of Community Conversations to inform policy options on double devolution, neighbourhood governance models and changes as to how DC works. All of the responses will then go to the Place and Resources Overview Committee in November of this year. Online sessions for Clerks and Chairs on the 5th/ 7th / 13th / 15th May. For further information, contact laura.dunne@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

The new Renters Rights Act came into force on the 1st May. Dorset Council has seen a large increase in S.21 Notices being issued in April. From May 1st, S21 notices will have been discontinued. A landlord now needs to issue an S8 notice and needs to give 4 months' notice and can only do so on the basis that the landlord needs to sell, move into the property himself or refurbish the premises extensively.

Anti-Social Behaviour continues to be a problem for neighbours in two locations where residents play loud music and smoke cannabis extensively, causing neighbours to constantly smell it. Drug use overall is a problem in Sturminster Newton in the known locations.

I was asked to see whether building had stopped at Fiddleford Ridge, and rumours were that houses were not selling and the developer was in financial trouble – this is NOT the case. Works are currently taking place inside the properties, and interest has picked up on sales.

I am looking into the footpath from the Legion being blocked off – I have spoken to the owner of the land, who is talking with his solicitors, as he feels the footpath may be in the wrong location. I am checking this out.

A 5-year program for the installation of EV chargers by Connected Kerb is going to be rolled out, providing on-street charging. We are waiting to hear the exact locations, but expect around 100 sites to be installed with 2 – 3 devices at each location over the next 12-18 months. Consultation will take place over these sites. This is aimed at those without driveways.

I have been asked to join the shadow cabinet with the Children's and Education Directorate. Nicholson's Cottages – I am working with SNG to provide full patching to the road, pot holes seem to have been filled in – although SNG don't believe they carried this out (!) – However, the sums being quoted are running at over £150K – and SNG only own 2 of the cottages there so further work is ongoing as to how best resolve this,

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2026-2027

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Councillor P Batstone
Councillor L Cooper
Councillor A Donaldson
Councillor H Lacey - Chair
Councillor D Mantock
Councillor J Rose
Councillor S Trim – Vice Chair

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor P Batstone
Councillor L Cooper
Councillor N Dobson
Councillor A Donaldson - Chair
Councillor C Fraser – Vice Chair
Councillor L Jackson
Councillor H Lacey
Councillor D Mantock
Councillor P Marks
Councillor J Rose
Councillor S Trim

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Councillor P Batstone
Councillor L Cooper – Vice Chair
Councillor A Donaldson
Councillor C Fraser
Councillor L Jackson
Councillor P Marks - Chair
Councillor J Rose

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND
ORGANISATIONS 2026/2027
Councillor Representatives

Cemetery Liaison	Cllr Charles Fraser
Community Buildings Trust	Town Mayor
DAPTC	Town Mayor/Deputy Town Mayor/Town Clerk
Rights of Way Officer	Cllr Lee Cooper
Sturminster Newton Allotments Association	Cllr Peter Marks/Cllr Debbie Mantock
Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust	Cllr Peter Marks
Sturminster Newton Twinning Association	Town Mayor/Deputy Mayor
Tree Officer	Cllr Lee Cooper
Charity of William Williams	Cllr Helen Lacey
Youth Representative	Cllr Helen Lacey

Working Groups

Mill Working Group	Cllr Charles Fraser Cllr Debbie Mantock Cllr Peter Marks
Neighbourhood Plan Review Group	Cllr Andrew Donaldson Cllr Charles Fraser Cllr Debbie Mantock
Community Emergency Response Plan Group	Cllr Lee Cooper Cllr Peter Marks Cllr Joe Rose Grounds Manager Office Administrator Town Clerk
Community Engagement Group	Cllr Liam Jackson Cllr Helen Lacey Cllr Susan Trim
Open Spaces Group	Cllr Lee Cooper Cllr Andrew Donaldson Cllr Charles Fraser Cllr Debbie Mantock Cllr Peter Marks Grounds Manager Martin Jones – Co-Opted Victor Fox – Co-Opted
Youth Hub Group	Cllr Lee Cooper Cllr Charles Fraser Cllr Helen Lacey Cllr Peter Marks Cllr Joe Rose
Developer Contributions	Cllr Andrew Donaldson Cllr Charles Fraser Cllr Susan Trim Dorset Cllr Carole Jones

Agenda Item 26/27/020

Mayors report – 6th May 2026

On 2nd April I attended the Business breakfast at Newstone House (also on 5th May at Community Connections)

11th Saw the Exchange Open day – a successful event attended by many from the town and surrounding area

23rd Was the Annual Town Meeting, where we given updates from the organisation that had received grants from the Council and I had the pleasure of presenting the ‘Community Stars’ award

24th St Mary’s church held a short service offered an opportunity to view the recently restored East window

25th Along with many others I attended the Volunteer Fair at the Exchange – an opportunity meet and talk with the many organisations in the town who rely on volunteers to operate

I also attended the following civic events during the month:-

15th Wimborne Civic Day

16th Portland Civic day

19th Chickerell Civic Service