STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 26 AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

PRESENT:
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr A Donaldson (Vice Chair)
Cllr C Fraser
Cllr H Lacey
Cllr P Marks
Cllr J Rose (Chair)
Cllr S Trim

IN ATTENDANCE:
K Squire (Town Clerk), Dorset Cllr C Jones

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 4

MINUTE NO	COMMENTS
2/2/172	**To receive comments and questions from members of the public** The Chair of the Sturminster Newton Allotments Association reported on their latest committee meeting as outlined in correspondence.
26/27/173	**Report from Dorset Councillor Carole Jones** Cllr Jones reported: • The footpath and ditch between Butts Pond Nature Reserve and Filbridge Rise needs clearing she has reported this to SNG. • She has requested a repaint of the zebra crossing in the town centre. • A new Dorset Council Highways Officer for the area should be recruited shortly. • Road adoption for Drovers and The Gavel is still ongoing with streetlight and drainage issues. • She requested the Town Council consider allowing the Grounds Team to cut back areas of Dorset Council hedge where Dorset Council do not have the staff capacity for their workload. • William Barnes Primary School are in the process of applying for S106 funding. • Dorset Councillors have now been briefed on the planning reform. She will attend the next P&E Committee meeting to share the information with the committee. • There have been major issues with bin collections which she is taking up Waste Services at Dorset Council. • New ward boundaries propose taking Hinton St Mary out of the Sturminster Newton Ward to join the Marnhull ward, with Stalbridge becoming a separate ward. • There have been reports of speeding at Elm Close but as the Fiddleford Ridge development is not complete a speed survey to reduce the speed limit would not produce accurate readings.

Chairs Initials .....

- She is looking into pavement issues near Newstone House.
- She is dealing with a complaint regarding the build out on Bath Road.
- There is a project to address Dorsets transport issues.

26/27/174 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Batstone, Goodland and Jackson who were unable to attend due to personal commitments These apologies were accepted by members.

26/27/175 To approve declarations of interest and written applications for dispensation

No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation received.

26/27/176 To approve the minutes of the previous Town Council meeting held on 2 September 2026.

A query was raised at the meeting regarding a possible omission in the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2 September 2026; however, this was subsequently checked and found not to be an error. The circulated and published minutes were therefore confirmed as a true and correct record without amendment and have been duly signed by the Chair.

26/27/177 To consider planning applications:

- **P/FUL/2026/05046 Bonslea Lodge, White Lane Close,DT10 1EJ Erect 2no. chalet bungalows**

Objection: The Town Council objects to this application as the proposal does not conform with Policy 23 of the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan. Particularly in relation to fronts and boundaries and landscaping. Members remain concerned about highway safety due to the position of the proposed access. The submitted documentation is also unclear and contains inaccuracies, including references to three dwellings when the application is for two. The Town Council considers that these inconsistencies should be clarified and corrected before the application is determined.

26/27/178 To approve recommendations from the following Committees:

- **Planning & Environment Committee 16 September 2026**

There were no items for recommendation from the Planning & Environment Committee.

- **Amenities Committee 23 September 2026**

The Chair of the Amenities Committee reported the following recommendations:

1. The committee resolved to recommend to Council that the Christians Together Nativity Scene be sited in the Railway Gardens over the festive period.
2. The committee resolved to recommend that Councils previous resolution to install allotments on the green space at Coles Close be reconsidered due to new information not available at the time of resolution.

Chairs Initials .....

3. The committee resolved to recommend to Council that the Clerk send a letter to requesting removal of the bin from the buggy refuge in the first instance and instruct the solicitor to write if this is not successful.
4. The committee resolved to recommend to Council that permission be given for a yarn bomb display in the Railway Gardens subject to approval of plans and installation by the Grounds Manager.
5. The committee resolved to recommend to Council that it is more logical for the Council to purchase the main town Christmas tree and the Community Benefit Society to organise the lights.
6. The committee resolved to adopt the plan as a working document subject to some minor edits of references to NDDC and DCC. The full plan will not be published on the website to avoid oversharing of contact information, but a summary of the plan would be uploaded instead.
7. The committee resolved to recommend to Council that the SNAA be given permission to investigate installation of a standpipe at Chinnocks allotment site.

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

Due to personal circumstances, Cllr Marks requested to step down as Chair of the Amenities Committee. Cllr Cooper will take over as acting Chair until Council formally consider a replacement at the next Full Council meeting.

26/27/179 To consider external auditor report and certificate following their review of the Sturminster Newton Town Council Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 25/26.

The Council noted acceptance of the external audit report and certificate previously circulated. Concluding the external audit of the Sturminster Newton Town Council AGAR for 25/26.

26/27/180 To approve a land management agreement for Filbridge Rise and Chinnocks allotment sites to the Sturminster Newton Allotment Association (SNAA)

The Clerk proposed amendments to the previously circulated draft land management agreements as follows:

- Wording change for clause 4.7 to The Association shall determine the charges payable by individual plot holders. The Association shall collect and manage those charges, keep accurate financial records and account to the Council in accordance with arrangements agreed between the parties.
- Wording change for clause 4.12 to Take reasonable steps to manage health and safety risks arising from activities organised or controlled by the Association on the Site.
- Adjust the required public liability insurance cover from 10 to 5 million.

The Council resolved to approve to land management agreements for Filbridge Rise and Chinnocks allotment sites to the SNAA subject to the above amendments.

26/27/181 To approve support for a joint application with the SNAA for Section 106 funding (from Land At E 377825 N 113305 A357 Access To Woodlands Farm To Glue Hill), to upgrade the water system at Filbridge Rise Allotments.

The Council considered a report previously circulated with the meeting papers.
The Council resolved to:

1. Support a joint application with the Sturminster Newton Allotment Association for Section 106 funding from the Land at E 377825 N 113305 A357 Access to Woodlands Farm to Glue Hill contribution.
2. Authorise the Town Clerk to submit the application and supporting documentation.
3. Record its appreciation of the significant work undertaken by the Chair of the Sturminster Newton Allotment Association in developing the proposal.

26/27/182 To approve payments over £2000

There were no payments over £2000 to authorise.

26/27/183 To receive correspondence

The correspondence received and circulated prior to the meeting from the SNAA committee is attached to these minutes.

26/27/184 To receive a report from the Town Clerk

The Clerk reported:

- A positive first interim internal audit visit from Mulberry IAS Ltd on the 1st October 26.
- Progress on the Honeymead Lane Education and Leisure Hub section 106 project having asked for support from Dorset Cllr Jones to overcome blocks to the project from Dorset Council due to criteria wording.
- Reminded members to complete GDPR training online as soon as possible as required for the AGAR for 26/27. Please let her know if you require a resend of the link.
- Successful meeting with Cllr Lacey and the Headteacher at the High School.
- Arrangements are in hand for Remembrance 26 with the Royal British Legion Sturminster Newton Branch and St Mary's Church.

26/27/185 To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor reported:
September

- Sat 5th Cllrs Surgery at The Hub (with Cllrs Batstone & Donaldson)
- Sat 12th Cheese Festival - Thanks to all who helped arrange/man the TC stand. Limited response (as expected) but an opportunity to have a public presence. I was also involved with the twinning stand (Mayor is president of the Twinning association) - a chance for the French to sell cheese and biscuits.
- Tue 15th Meeting with Rev Mary Gubbins, Trevor Legg and clerk re: Remembrance parade and service

Chairs Initials .....

- Mon 21st CERP meeting to review and progress the Emergency Response Plan

I have attended one civic event outside the town:-
October

- Weds 7th Bridport Civic Day, including visits to The Lyric Theatre, Arts Centre, Electric Palace, Museum and the Youth and Community Centre

26/27/186 To receive information from members and proposals for future business

Cllr Fraser - reported on Cllr Jacksons behalf, of a meeting to discuss water quality testing on the Stour which Cllr Jackson is organising with Dorset Wildlife Trust as part of the biodiversity project.

Cllr Cooper – reported having been approached by residents concerned about speeding on Bath Road. He also enquired regarding progress on the youth hub meeting with the Boxing Club, the Clerk advised this was booked for Friday the 9th October.

Cllr Lacey – reported a successful meeting with the Headteacher at the High School to agree a more formal approach to the Youth Council and discuss ways the High School can work with other community organisations.

Cllr Marks – commented positively regarding the high standards at the High School. He thanked the Chair of the Allotment Association for his clarity regarding the Coles Close allotment extension project and expressed hope that in the future an alternative solution to providing additional allotments could be found.

Cllr Donaldson – Wished to apologise for incorrectly reporting that planning application P/NMA/2026/04672 had been granted when it had been refused. He also thanked Dorset Cllr Jones for agreeing to take part in discussions at the next Planning & Environment Committee meeting about the latest Government planning reform. He expressed hope that updated planning training will be offered by Dorset Council for Town and Parish Councils. He lastly confirmed attendance at the 1 October 26 Business Breakfast meeting although there were no matters arising for Council consideration.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20.07

Chairs Signature…… Date Approved ……

Chairs Initials ……

26/27/183 Correspondence

Dear Town Clerk and Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of the Allotment Association in advance of the forthcoming full Council meeting to set out our position regarding the possible use of the Council-owned land at Coles Close for additional allotments.

The Association has followed the appropriate procedures and attended the relevant meetings to progress this matter. We would be grateful if this work, and the history of the proposal since the Amenities Committee meeting of 30 March 2023, could be recognised.

There remains an established need for additional allotment provision in Sturminster Newton. The allotments are also more than individual plots: the Association is a community of local people who share knowledge, support one another and work together to maintain and improve the sites.

We want to make it clear that we do not wish to create conflict or division. Our intention is to work calmly and constructively with the Council, nearby residents and the wider community to find a fair and practical way forward. After careful consideration, the Association has therefore decided to step back from the Coles Close project and postpone it for the time being.

This does not mean that we are walking away from the need for further allotments. We ask the Council to continue considering suitable alternatives and to explore whether Section 106 funding linked to the Corallian Heights development could support eligible allotment provision or related community infrastructure, subject to the specific criteria and legal requirements of the agreement.

We hope the Council will respect the Association's decision to pause the Coles Close project and allow us the time and space to consider our next steps. We would welcome continued constructive discussion about how the need for additional allotments can best be met for the benefit of Sturminster Newton.

Yours faithfully,

The Allotment Association

Chairs Initials .....