**SHIPTON GORGE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Notes/Minutes of the Meeting of the Shipton Gorge Parish Council held on  
7:30pm on Thursday 9 January 2025**

**At Shipton Gorge Village Hall**

**Present: Cllr Paul Thimont CHAIR, Cllr Martine Simmonds, Cllr Lizzy forte, Cllr Simon Crafter,   
Debbie Hollings CLERK**

**Also in attendance: One parishioner from Shipton Gorge.**

1. **Apologies for absence**

Ward Councillor Sally Holland

1. **Declarations of interest**

None

1. **Democratic time**

1 parishioner attended.

1. **Approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 05 September 2024**

Proposed as a true record of proceedings by Cllr Simmonds, seconded by Cllr Crafter and all unanimously agreed.

1. **Matters arising since previous meeting not part of this Agenda**

None.

Clerk advised that some correspondence had been received:

1. From Dorset Council Definitive Map Team. Change to Definitive Map and Statement for Shipton Gorge showing public rights of way.
2. From Mr. Richard Hall, Gribb Farm, Loders Cross. Letter outlining Community Governance Boundary changes from April 2024 between Loders Parish and Shipton Gorge Parish along with a request for help to the parish council in the creation of a petition to Dorset Council. Although the parish council is sympathetic to Mr Hall and his wish to petition for the changes to be reversed, they do not have any experience or knowledge that they believe would be helpful to him.

Clerk advised to respond to Mr Hall and supply contact details for CGR officer.

1. Dorset Highways. Temporary Closure of Bonscombe Lane, Shipton Gorge to enable BT

Openreach safe access to carry out pole testing.

Clerk to pass details to councillors to enable them to be added to the village Facebook page and they will also be added to the Parish Council website.

1. Bride Valley News. Magazine article deadline and publishing timetable from January 2025 through January 2026 received.
2. Request for Annual Return 2024 from Charity Commission.

Clerk to investigate further and ensure that the Annual Return is completed by the deadline. The return relates to the King George’s Field in Shipton Gorge.

Correspondence will now be included in meeting agendas.

1. **Dorset Council overview - Ward Councillor for Chesil Bank: Cllr Sally Holland**

Cllr Holland was unable to attend but sent a written report:

**Chesil Bank Councillor Report for January 2025**

**Dorset Plan** – was voted through at Full Council on the 5th December 2024.

**Budget Plans** – these are ongoing and there is no final budget to report on currently. The link below gives more detail of the plans, which still have to go through the scrutiny process. The budget is £416 million an increase of £39 million from last year. The additional cost of service delivery next year is forecast to be £83.4 million. Council funding is set and limited by Government and this sum is not affordable. The council’s budget proposals therefore also outline significant cost-saving measures. There is a proposed rise in council tax of just under 3% and increase in the precept for adult social care of 2%.

[**www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/dorset-council-unveils-bold-416-million-budget-for-2025-26**](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/dorset-council-unveils-bold-416-million-budget-for-2025-26)

**20mph Applications** (Coast Road) – Abbotsbury is near submitting their application, with a high level of support from the residents. Portesham has applied for traffic surveys on the two roads required to complete application and will doing a resident’s survey. Burton Bradstock is awaiting survey results and have had a lot of support from the local community.

**Bus Service Improvement Plan** – Dorset was awarded £3.8million from central government, this was considerably less than neighbouring councils so is disappointing with regard to increasing rural bus services. DC is keen to transform bus usage across the county, but this is subject to securing external funding.

**Planning** with the large target for new homes set by the government, DC has opened a ‘Call for Sites 2024’ inviting landowners to submit land for consideration as part of the Local Plan.

1. **Chairman’s report**

The Chairman was happy to move onto the main business of the meeting, to discuss and agree the Budget and Precept request for the coming financial year under the Clerks/RFO Report.

1. **Clerk’s/RFO Report including:**
   1. Approval of invoices for payment as show on amended Schedule (attached).

Proposed Cllr Crafter, seconded Cllr Simmonds and all unanimously agreed.

* 1. To note the Schedule of Regular Payments including salary payments.

Clerk explained that the previous clerk has not taken any salary for the post for the whole year. Additional payment due to HMRC for nil-returns.

10 hours of handover with the previous clerk is due.

Proposed Cllr Crafter, seconded Cllr Simmonds and unanimously agreed.

* 1. Banking update

Clerk advised that there was nothing further to report on a new bank account. Clerk to

ensure new account is set up as soon as possible.

* 1. To discuss precept and budget calculations 2025

Information regarding the current budget situation and the proposed budget for the coming financial year 2025/2026 had been made available to all councillors for preparation prior to the meeting and to help them understand the precept request procedures.

Cllr Thimont talked all councillors through the current year’s budget and explained the costs that had been incurred on playground equipment refurbishment and how this spend had affected the ringfenced reserves for the playground.

Discussions on the different financial pressures on council spending were detailed and thorough. Councillors agreed that the budget set for 2025/2026 was appropriate and that the precept request should be £14,165.00. This represents a 32% increase on the previous year’s precept of £10,722.00.  Because the number of Band D properties has also increased by over 7% during the year from 211 to 226, the rise in the precept for a Band D property will be 23.2%, from £50.72 to £62.48.  This additional £11.76 for the year equates to 22.6 pence a week.

Cllr Simon Crafter proposed that the Annual Precept for 2025/2026 be £14,165.00.

Cllr Martine Simmonds seconded, and all unanimously agreed.

1. **Councillors’ Portfolios:** 
   1. **Planning: Cllr Crafter**

Cllr Crafter advised that one planning application had been received, and this was a barn conversion into a retirement home in the neighbouring parish of Walditch. Cllr Crafter queried why Shipton Gorge PC would be on the list of consultees.

Clerk to contact Dorset Council Planning Team to find out more information.

Clerk advised that DAPTC has an all day Planning Conference for parish councillor on 4th March 2025. Dorset Council will be in attendance to provide advice and answer queries.

* 1. **Defibrillator: Vacancy**

Hilary Cunningham is still checking the defibrillator and is happy to contuinue doing so for the time

being.

* 1. **Highways/Transport: Cllr Forte**

Items to be discussed under point 9.5.

* 1. **Playground/ Playing Field:** Cllr Thimont

Cllr Thimont will be going to be requesting 3 quotes for the next years’ worth of grass cutting and maintenance of the field.

* 1. **Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Forte**

Cllr Crafter has kindly drawn up a map of where all the drains are in the village. Currently there are only two blocked. Cllr Crafter and Cllr Forte are keen to go ahead with the idea of asking residents to adopt a drain, therefore the drains need to be named and people need to know where they are. Cllrs Crafter and Forte to do another walk around the village to finalise the map and the council can then decide how to move forward and request residents’ help.

* 1. **Climate and resilience: Cllr Simmonds**

To be discussed under Item 11.

* 1. **IT/Website: Vacancy**

The Council has already agreed to bring this project back in March 2025 to discuss further.

Clerk to create report with possible options.

* 1. **Phone Box Library: Cllr Forte**

Cllr Forte reported that Ian Ferguson has very kindly fixed new shelves in the telephone box.

1. **Planning matters –new applications –**

Already discussed.

1. **Discuss and approve further work on the creation of a Parish Council Emergency Resilience Plan.**

Cllr Simmonds has spoken to the Emergency Management officer at Dorset Council, Nigel

Osborne. He is also head of resilience planning and would be very happy to come along to the

village to do a talk to the village residents even on a weekend. Following discussions, it was

thought that it may be a good idea to as Nigel to come along to the Annual Meeting of the Parish

(Village Meeting) to explain what options and opportunities are available and how we can start

working on a Resilience Plan.

1. **To Discuss and agree possible changes to the format of the regular parish council meetings.**

The 20 Minute Democratic Time now added to the agenda was discussed and councillors felt that it should be left on the Agenda. Changes can be made if necessary.

1. **To discuss and agree format of next Annual Parish Meeting (Village Meeting) to help set priorities for the parish council.**

Clerk to work with councillors to arrange the date for the village meeting.

1. **Set the date, time and venue for the Annual Parish Meeting (to take place between 1st March and 1st June)**

Cllr Thimont confirmed that he would speak to the Chairs of the other village organisations to find a date

that was suitable for all groups. Once the date has been decided upon, the format can be discussed,

agreed and communicated to all interested parties, including Nigel Osborne to see if he is available.

1. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 13th March 2025.
2. **Meeting closed 21:40**
3. **Items to be discussed at next meeting.**
4. Adopt a Drain proposals.

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