

SHIPTON GORGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shipton Gorge Parish Council held on 7:00pm on Thursday 13 March 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

None

2. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations.

Cllr Elizabeth Forte declared an interest in Planning Application /HOU/2025/00338 for amendments to Brook Cottage, Shipton Gorge.

3. Democratic time

1 parishioner attended.

4. Approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 09 January 2025

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

5. Matters arising since previous meeting not part of this Agenda

None.

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

Cllr Holland presented her March 2025 report to the council, highlighting the following points:

- **Portland Waste Incinerator** – Installation of the incinerator has been a contentious issue with Dorset Council opposing its progress despite the Environment Agency granting certification. The application is due to be heard in the High Court within days and there is hope this will halt the application's progress. Although the application applies to Portland, the incinerator will affect businesses, trade and tourism throughout the whole of west and south Dorset. There is a risk to the UNESCO status for the Jurassic Coast if the incinerator is built.
- **Devolution** – Although the bid was unsuccessful, the council now have the opportunity to learn of the real costs of devolution through the progress of the councils still involved.
- **Climate and Nature Recovery Strategy** – Dorset Council is fast-tracking climate initiatives, bringing net-zero targets forward by five years. Plans include electric vehicles, hydrotreated vegetable oil, and sustainable farming. Meanwhile, housing targets are raising environmental concerns, but the council is prioritizing affordable housing in its Local Plan, due by March 2025
- **Recruitment of new Dorset Council Chief Executive** – Currently in the process of recruitment and received 130 plus applications which have now narrowed down to 15.
- **PSPO Public Space Protection Order** – The Open Land Protection Order covers Hardy's Monument and Blackdown Forest to prevent fires, BBQs, and lanterns. A PSPO exists in West Bexington and Abbotsbury to tackle antisocial behaviour. Originally set to expire in July, it is now extended for three years, expanding to Studland and Purbeck, though officers mainly focus on Weymouth

7. Chairman's report

The Chairman was happy to move onto the main business, noting that the precept increase leaflet was sent out with the Bride Valley News. He received two comments, both supporting the council's transparency.

8. Clerk's/RFO Report including Correspondence

The Clerk presented her report including the following highlights:

A neighbouring property by Port Lane raised concerns about a low telephone line delaying hedge trimming. Openreach successfully resolved the issue.

Helen Fry of Bride Valley Churches requested updates to the parish council website, which have been completed.

Richard Hewlett thanked the council for the £50 towards the Drop In Café and suggested that council consider making a regular donation to the Bride Valley News.

ACTION: Clerk to contact BVN for further details about the request for annual donations.

The Clerk has successfully passed the CiLCA qualification (see 8.4) and is now a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

A Facebook account has been created as Shipton Gorge Parish Clerk, along with a page for Shipton Gorge Parish Council. The page, currently featuring a tree logo, requires photos of the village and surrounding area.

ACTION: Councillors to send photos to the Clerk to upload to the Parish Council page.

The Parish Clerk has requested to join the Shipton Gorge Community Page.

New defibrillator pads have been ordered and passed over to Hilary Cunningham, who maintains the defibrillator. The councillors wished to record thanks to Hilary for her continued support in this area.

Defibrillator training: The Clerk reached out to the previous trainer in the village but has not received a response. Elizabeth suggested contacting SW Ambulance Service or St John's Ambulance. It has been confirmed that defibrillator equipment is available in the village hall.

ACTION: Clerk to contact SW Ambulance Service and St John's Ambulance to find out if they run local defib courses.

8.1 Approval of invoices for payment as show on amended Schedule (attached).

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

8.2 To note the Schedule of Regular Payments including salary payments.

Proposed Cllr Crafter, seconded Cllr Simmonds and unanimously agreed.

8.3 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.

8.4 Following the successful completion of the CiLCA qualification, all councillors confirmed that they were happy for the Clerk to progress to the next pay scale point and approve £28 additional backpay for March 2025. Proposed Cllr Crafter, seconded Cllr Forte and all unanimously agreed.

9. Councillors' Portfolios:

9.1 Planning: Cllr Crafter

One new application received for the village, Planning Application /HOU/2025/00338 for amendments to Brook Cottage, Shipton Gorge had previously been circulated to all councillors. Those able to all approved the amendments and the Parish Council has already submitted an entry to Support the changes. The submission was created on 17th February 2025.

Both the Clerk and Cllr Crafter attended a Future Planning Event put on at the Prince Albert Hotel in Dorset by the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC). The Clerk has provided councillors with a copy of her notes from the day. Highlights and information from the day were briefly discussed and further information on the topics and details for the event can be requested from the Clerk. Further details on the Q and A sessions with Dorset Council will also be distributed as soon as they are received.

9.2 Defibrillator: Vacancy

Hilary Cunningham is still checking the defibrillator and is happy to continue doing so for the time being.

9.2.1 Defibrillator Training for villagers. The clerk has been unable to contact the previous trainer, However, they will contact the SWAS and the St John's Ambulance as suggested to try to arrange a session. Councillors approved a budget for the training of up to £100, proposed by Cllr Forte and seconded by Cllr Crafter.

9.3 Highways/Transport: Cllr Forte

Draining issues are currently being looked at by Cllr Simmonds.
Mobile signal coverage will be discussed under Item 11 Resilience.

9.4 Playground/ Playing Field: Cllr Thimont

9.4.1 The old posts have been removed. The Clerk shared replacement options, with costs up to £1,000, including installation. Cllr Crafter proposed using the existing smaller five-a-side goalposts, which could be moved around to minimise wear on the field. A new Croquet club has been discussed and may use the playing field.

9.4.2 Replacement Bin. The Clerk confirmed that Dorset Waste do not own the bin, it is the property of the parish council. The waste team does not go into the playing field to empty the bin, however somebody is going into the field and collecting the waste and leaving a bag by the gates by 7.30am for collection each Thursday morning by the waste team as it goes through the village collecting waste.

The Clerk investigated bins to replace the existing one. However, the councillors felt that only the metal insert of the bin required to be replaced. Cllr Thimont was requested to measure the bin insert, and the Clerk will try to find a suitable replacement. A photograph of the bin would also be very useful to enable her to find like for like as a replacement top for the bin is also required.

ACTION: Cllr Thimont to photograph the existing bin and provide measurements for a possible replacement top and replacement metal insert for the bin.

9.4.3 Replacement signage for playing field. No action has been undertaken, Clerk to move forward.

9.4.4 Update on moles in the playing field. Cllr Thimont confirmed that Joe the Mole was meeting Paul in the playing field on Saturday. Joe charges by the mole.

ACTION: Cllr Thimont to follow up and provide further details at the next meeting.

9.5 Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Forte

Cllr Forte reported she had reported a broken stile on Old Market Lane to Dorset Council and it was mended straight away.

Cllr Thimont advised there was a large hump in the road that goes up towards Lynch Farm and Uploders, which is now part of the parish.

ACTION: Cllr Forte will report the issue via the portal, however it may already have been reported.

9.6 Climate and resilience: Cllr Simmonds

9.6.1 Surface water. Following her request for evidence on social media, Cllr Simmonds received three submissions with details of excessive surface water. Cllr Simmonds would like to put out an additional request for further information. She currently has no evidence of water lying in

fields, only where the water runs off the fields. Cllr Crafter and Cllr Forte have recently created a map of the village main routes where details of drains and gullies are shown. Cllr Simmonds requested to use this map as the base for the information on surface water and inundation. That way all the useful information would be on one map.

ACTION: Cllr Simmonds to put out a further request to villages for surface water inundation, including photographs or videos.

- 9.6.2 Adopt a drain. The Dorset Council contact for highway drainage is Stuart Smith. The parish council want to see the whole village swept. Then they want to ensure that any blockage, when discovered, be reported to Dorset Council straight away through the portal.

The member of public present agreed that Adopt a Drain is a great idea, and he currently keeps the one outside his house clear. He also advised the council that drains can often be in the wrong place for collection of water. For example, the main gully above his house, which is on a hill in the village, directs the water which then misses the drain as it is not in the right place. Ideally, it should be moved further out in the road. There is video of this evidence of this. Simmonds suggested that this issue is reported through the Dorset Portal with the video evidence and does not need to wait to be included in the information that she is currently gathering.

The member of public present has been in touch with **Openreach**. Openreach have advised that the copper system will be retired by January 2027. Copper will be replaced by fibre and Openreach has published plans that can be accessed online so that anybody can see when broadband will be coming to their area. West Dorset and all the local villages are 'green' coded which means they will be upgraded. Openreach plan to upgrade the Burton exchange and then the subsequently the local villages.

Mobile or satellite, both more expensive and less reliable should also be available to parishioners. Cllr Forte confirmed that she was already in touch with the Digital team at Atlas Tower group who may be the organisation to help provide mobile coverage in the village. She has had one Zoom meeting with them already.

Cllr Thimont suggested that it could be useful in the area is to find out where other villages are now placed with both broadband and mobile coverage. Cllr Sally Holland agreed she will speak to Dorset Council portfolio holder for infrastructure on behalf of the valley. Cllr Morello, may be able to help.

ACTION – Clerk to write to all BVN villages to see where they are with Broadband and mobile phone/satellite coverage.

ACTION – Cllr Forte to ask Atlas to present at the next parish council meeting.

9.7 IT/Website: Vacancy

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

Clerk to create report with possible options.

- Put onto the next agenda.

9.8 Phone Box Library: Cllr Forte

There is now a Seed Exchange box in the phone box, where you can take a packet of seeds and swap it for another packet that you want. Also, Ian Ferguson has carried out further work on the verge leading up to the phone box. The council noted their thanks to Ian for this work.

10. Planning matters –new applications

Already discussed.

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

At the Annual Parish Meeting in April, Nigel Osborne from Dorset Council Emergency Resilience Team will come along and advise people on what the village needs to do to set up its own Emergency Resilience

plan. Previous plan is very old, with people included who are no longer in the village. More details on Emergency Planning can be found on the [Dorset Prepared website](#).

12. To discuss and agree format of Annual Parish Meeting being held on 10th April 2025 and how it can help set priorities for the parish council.

Cllr Thimont has been in touch with other village organisations including the Pub, the Orchard, the Village Hall and the village Society to ensure that they attend. A projector will be needed for the evening.

13. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th May 2025

14. Meeting closed 20:50

15. Items to be discussed at next meeting.

- a) Adopt a Drain proposals.
- b) Grass Cutting Contract.

_____ Chairman's Signature

_____ Date