

SHIPTON GORGE PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the Shipton Gorge Parish Council was held
7.00pm on Thursday 12th March 2026
at Shipton Gorge Village Hall

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Councillors Present:

Cllr Paul Thimont (Chair)
Cllr Elizabeth Forte
Cllr Martine Simmonds
Cllr Simon Crafter

Also Present

Ms Debbie Hollings (Clerk)

Dorset Council Cllr Sally Holland
One resident of the Shipton Gorge community.

1. To Receive apologies for absence

None received.

2. To Receive Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

No declarations of interest received or dispensation requests.

3. Democratic Time

Resident Tony Mallet updated the Parish Council on the latest news that the Burton Bradstock exchange will be receiving a fibre upgrade within the next 12 months. As Shipton Gorge fibre broadband will be fed from the Burton Bradstock exchange, this should be good news for the village residents. A map is now available, providing details of the digital rollout using data from the government site BDUK. The map can be found at [BDUK contract data now available on interactive map | thinkbroadband](#) The map shows that it is likely to be a commercial provider working on the top half of the village; question marks remain over the lower half. Although the data available was around 12 months old, the consequence of the difference between the top and the lower half of the village, if that map and that data are actually true, is that the top half of the village will be part of a commercial build, which means the network builder will be funding that themselves. The lower part of the village will require additional funding.

Although it's very difficult for an individual to find out what a provider, such as Openreach, is planning in their area, they can register their own interest in obtaining a broadband service when it becomes available.

Wessex Internet are not interested in expanding the network in Burton Bradstock and the surrounding area. They are providing services around Abbotsbury and Portesham.

The Parish Council thanked Mr Mallet for the information provided and requested that he keep it up to date with any future developments, which he agreed to do.

4. Approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2026.

Cllr Crafter proposed that the minutes were an accurate record. Cllr Forte seconded, and all councillors agreed.

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

Cllr Thimont confirmed that a response had been received from the Dorset Council Planning Enforcement Team After the Clerk followed up on the Parish Council's request for further information regarding the temporary building now installed at the land to the west of Home Farm Way and behind Brook Cottage in Brook Street, Shipton Gorge. Dorset Council have confirmed that they are continuing their investigation into the installation.

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

Cllr Holland presented her report.

Dorset Council will consider a £2 million investment to lower its energy bills and reduce carbon.

Dorset Council won a national clean energy award for its low-carbon efforts, installing solar panels on 113 buildings that generate 4.6 million kWh yearly and save £520,000, with more installations planned.

Road maintenance funding has increased, with up to £5.25 million approved to tackle flooding and reduce future disruption, including £5 million for flood resilience and £250,000 for an additional gully cleaning crew with a proactive year-round schedule.

Cllr Holland reported contacting National Highways about severe winter damage and potholes on the A35 but received no clear answer on resurfacing.

7. Chairman's Report

Cllr Thimont reported that the Local Government Boundary Review has now mostly been completed. The outcome of the review is that all but three properties will be returned to their place within the boundary of Loders Parish Council. Cllr Holland stated that she had recently visited those properties affected by the change consult with their occupants.

Cllr Thimont attended the BLAP (Bridport & Local Area Partnership) meeting and gave an outline of the meeting. There was a presentation by Nature Buddies, which is an organisation that pairs people up to enable those that can't, get out into nature.

8. Clerk/RFO's Report including correspondence

The Clerk presented councillors with the current Budget and Commitment spreadsheet up to today's date and also, the current bank reconciliation report.

8.1 Approval of invoices for payment

Proposed by Cllr Simmonds and seconded by Cllr Forte and carried unanimously.

8.2 To note and approve the Schedule of Regular Payments

Proposed by Cllr Simmonds and seconded by Cllr Forte and carried unanimously.

9. Mobile Signal Update

Cllr Forte reported that she had received information from Mark Shaw of the Atlas Tower Group reporting that he had met a local land owner to survey a possible site for a mobile tower. Unfortunately, the tower would

need to be located on the ridge between Shipton Gorge and Burton Bradstock, and because this would be within an area of outstanding natural beauty, it is expected that gaining planning permission for the tower would be very difficult. Further investigation showed that the mobile tower would need to be at around 23 metres tall. The survey also found that the north of the village towards the A35 was covered for mobile use by the provider EE.

With regards to the possible siting of equipment on St Martin's church tower, Mr Shaw confirmed that Atlas Tower would not be able to undertake this. There is a company that manages this type of work on behalf of the Church of England. Any coverage would be limited and would only be covered by a single operator.

10. Councillors' Portfolios:

10.1 Planning: Cllr Crafter

Cllr Crafter confirmed that there were no applications to consider.

10.2 Highways/Transport: Cllr Forte

Cllr Thimont confirmed that Icen Road remains closed and that Dorset Council are working with Lynch Farm to ensure that the road is cleared.

Markets Lane, on the way to The Parlour at Bredy Farm, is also closed due to water erosion.

Cllr Crafter reported that there was a fence in Cuckoo Lane that had recently become relatively unsafe for both pedestrians and traffic. Cllr Crafter has contacted the owner of the property and has been assured that the fence is now secure. Cllr Crafter will offer to support the owner.

10.2.1 Update on parish council Finger Posts.

Cllr Crafter reported that he will contact Roger Bond to discuss Roger's offer to help clean up and refurbish the fingerposts around the village.

10.3. Playground/ Playing Field: Cllr Thimont

Cllr Thimont confirmed that the new rubbish bin, along with appropriate fixings, should now be ordered by the Clerk.

Cllr Thimont reported that Townsends, who have been contracted to carry out the refurbishment of the play equipment and fence to the playing field, have been delayed in starting work due to the poor weather.

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

No current matters for discussion.

10.5 Climate and resilience: Cllr Simmonds

10.5.1 Update on Emergency Resilience Planning.

Cllr Simmonds reported that the Clerk is currently working with her to create a draft document. The draft document will be distributed to all councillors for comments before being shared with other

groups within the village for further consideration.

10.5.2 Update of surface flooding report.

Cllr Simmonds informed councillors that she had very recently spoken with Alex Butler, of the Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (South West), and also received a report from him. He confirmed that he had visited the village on three different occasions before Christmas and once afterwards. Mr Butler took many photos of the parts of the village that have previously had issues with surface water. He has also endeavoured to engage with the landowners of the areas. This work will continue, and FWAG will keep Cllr Simmonds of any progress.

Cllr Simmonds presented the leaflet, created by herself and the Clerk, for councillors to agree on its distribution to all residents, along with the next edition of the Bride Valley News. Several small changes were agreed upon. The Clerk will make these changes and pass the updated version to Cllr Simmonds for printing in A5 size, distribution and publication via social media and the parish council website pages.

10.6 IT/Website: Cllr Crafter

Cllr Thimont reported that, on the advice of the Clerk, he had been looking at the compliance of the existing village website with Accessibility and Transparency regulations for parish councils. The current site does not match the requirements. There are suppliers of parish council websites that the councillors should investigate; details have already been sent to all. The council needs to advise the community groups and societies within Shipton Gorge, who also have pages on the current site, that the site is to be replaced. Access will not be granted to the groups and societies, information on the site will be maintained by the Clerk, and any links to their own websites/social media can be added.

All councillors have been requested to look at other parish council websites and to let Cllr Thimont and the Clerk know how they would like the new site to look and what items are required to be included. It was generally agreed that a calendar would be a useful idea and that other groups in the village would be able to supply dates of events to be included. This item will be discussed further at a future parish council meeting, and the next steps forward will be agreed.

10.7 Phone Box/Bookstore/Seed Swap: Cllr Forte

No current matters for discussion.

11. Date of next meeting: Annual Parish Assembly will take place at 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 15th April 2026, and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will take place at 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 29th April 2026.

12. Meeting close. The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/RFO
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