

SHIPTON GORGE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON
MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2007

Present: Cllr David Smith (Chairman) (DS), Cllr Charles Errington (Vice-chairman) (CE), Cllr Mrs Jean Ayers (JA), Cllr Richard Cunningham (RC), Cllr Colin Green (CG), Cllr Robert Langran (RL), Cllr Mrs Amy Steele (AS), Cllr Robert White (RW).

In attendance:

Parish Clerk Ernie Thomas, County Councillor Ron Coatsworth (CC), District Councillor Mark Parsons (MP) and one member of the public.

Open Forum:

Mary Boughton handed photographs of recent stormwater flows and blocked drains in the village to the Clerk who agreed to pass these on to Blair Turner of DCC. CC mentioned concerns about closure of Day Centres due to underutilisation. Only the Dorchester centre had a waiting list. The Beaminster centre had been closed but all those who wished to could still attend an appropriate centre. Mary Boughton mentioned that the next Parish Appraisal would fall due in 2009, previous appraisals having been conducted in 1979, 1989 and 1999.

465. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

466. To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2007

The minutes of the PC meeting of 12 September were agreed subject to the amendment of the first part of sub-paragraph 2 of minute 454 to read "RC has confirmed ...". The minutes as amended were signed by DS.

467. Clerk's Report

1. As previously reported, a request had been made to WDDC in August for the waste bin at Burbitt Lane to be made a fixture and for a notice about using it for bagged dog waste to be affixed. Although the person responsible was still on sick leave, a colleague who had promised early action in September had apologised for the delay and hoped to have the work completed within the next week.
2. Clerk had notified the Standards Board for England of adoption of the new Model Code of Conduct for parish councils and this had been acknowledged.
3. Copies of the Standing Orders had been circulated to all Parish Councillors.
4. Annual Update form for King George's Field, Shipton Gorge had been submitted to the Charity Commission.
5. Clerk had notified WDDC of the number of fixed signs required in connection with dog control orders.

468. Other matters arising from the minutes

1. CE said that the formal agreement with DAPTC for provision of the Connecting Dorset programme remained to be signed and submitted as agreed at the previous meeting.
Clerk to progress this matter.
2. DS reported that he had sent the response on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper and CE reported that he had sent the response on consultation on additional pitch requirements for gypsies and travellers.
3. RC said that although the response had been sent to the consultation document "Affordable Housing Provision as a Result of Planning Obligations", this had been an unattributed online response and he was unable to access a copy for circulation.

469. To consider and approve the precept for 2008-09

The draft budget for 2008-09, previously circulated, was discussed. The Clerk reported that due to the expected higher level of income and expenditure, the fixed scale audit fee payable in the coming financial year was likely to increase, hence the inclusion of a higher estimated fee of £120. He also reported that since preparation of the draft, the nationally negotiated increase in clerks' salaries for the current financial year had been agreed at 2.475% which would have resulted in his current salary being £1,062 p.a. instead of the £1,080 actually awarded. The Parish Council was content to leave this unchanged and the prospective salary for 2008-09 of £1,110 was agreed, representing a 2.5% increase on the current salary. Following the Clerk's explanation of the benefits of his SLCC membership, it was agreed to fund the subscription in 2008-09, with a further review of the membership benefits in the coming year. The proposed playing field budget, previously circulated, was agreed at £1,630, to include the sum of £450 earmarked for transfer to reserves. It was proposed by CE, seconded by RL and resolved unanimously that the precept for the coming financial year be set at £4,325. The makeup of this figure was as follows:

Item	2008/2009 funding £
Clerk's wages	1,110
Stationery	100
Playing field	1,630
OVERHEADS	
Insurance	340
DAPTC	95
Audit	120
Storage of filing cabinet	50
Web site	75
Village hall	100
Training	100
IT costs	200
SLCC subscription	55
CHARITIES	
St Martin's	100
Other	50
CONTINGENCY	200
TOTAL	£4,325

470. To consider and, if thought fit, adopt Financial Regulations

It was noted that the PC was required to have financial regulations and a first draft needed more work carried out to produce regulations that were proportionate to the needs of a small parish council, Agreed that the **Clerk, DS and CE** should progress this matter and prepare a revised draft for consideration at the next meeting.

471. To consider the invitation for a Parish Council representative on the board of directors of Shipton Gorge Ltd

DS reported that a letter had been received from Shipton Gorge Limited shortly before the previous meeting inviting the PC to nominate an individual to serve as a director of the Company. He felt it would be a big step to have a nominee director of a limited company and was not sure of the benefit to the PC of such an appointment. The Clerk mentioned that any such appointee would carry the same personal obligations as any company director for the actions of the company and the PC was not permitted to give the nominee any indemnity from such personal liability. RC said that a nominee might appear to support contentious issues and also

questioned the position if a nominee should cease to be a Parish Councillor. CE said that the objective was to broaden the directorships and give the opportunity for the community to be involved. The Clerk said that a report on the Company's activities could form part of the "Reports" item on PC agendas. After further discussion it was proposed by DS, seconded by JA and resolved by a majority (CE and RL abstaining) that the invitation should not be accepted. DS to reply accordingly.

472. To consider a Parish Plan and to appoint a working party to progress this matter

DS reported that he and Simon Cleveland (SC) had had a useful meeting with Mike Southgate of Burton Bradstock PC from which it was clear that the PC could lose out on various opportunities if it did not have a Parish Plan. A working party consisting of SC, Peter Gates and RC would work on development of the Parish Plan and CE had also been invited to join. DS to arrange for an item in BVN to see whether anyone else was interested in participating and also to attend an initial meeting to start the process off. Contact had already been made with Simon Thompson of Dorset Community Action regarding funding opportunities and it was understood that Burton Bradstock had received around £2,000 in grant aid. JA said that DAPTC regarded it as very important to have a Parish Plan. SC was concerned to ensure that his independence as internal auditor to the PC was not compromised by his involvement in the Parish Plan working party. The Clerk said that the Parish Plan was not a creature of the PC, which merely acted to facilitate the process. The Parish Council agreed to record that SC's involvement was not regarded as compromising his position as its internal auditor.

473. To consider the development of a four-year strategy for the Parish Council

DS said that a meeting had not been convened to progress this matter and he would deal with this matter at the forthcoming meeting of the Parish Plan working party.

474. Reports:

Planning

CG outlined new applications recorded on the Planning Sheet recently circulated. As regards the land to the rear of 1-16 Peas Hill, Magna had kindly provided an advance copy of their plans. CG acknowledged the valuable assistance provided by Stephen Marriott in reviewing the plans. Much of the design was commendable although stormwater drainage and mains water pressure were matters of great concern that needed to be addressed. CC said that some of these were not planning issues. AS observed that Magna had responded to many of the concerns expressed about their earlier planning application. Agreed that CG should write to Magna thanking them for the information provided and outlining the matters of concern so far identified.

General Finance

Copies of the 2007/2008 accounts with details of bank balances at 31 October were distributed. The Clerk reported that the Scottish Widows Bank Call Treasury Tracker Account had been opened and funds previously held in the Lloyds TSB Playing Field Account totalling £11,779.50 had been credited to that account. DS and CE signed a letter requesting monthly statements of account to facilitate preparation of financial accounts. The following payments had been made since the last meeting:

CHEQUE No	RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
438	E S Thomas	£29.64
439	BDO Stoy Hayward	£58.75
440	Townsend Engineering	£182.13
441	Damon Allen	£90.00
442	C C Green	£8.98
443	E S Thomas	£540.00
444	Grayham Rosamond	£181.42
445	Contract Monitoring Services Ltd	£27.55

Cheques Nos. 439 and 443 were in respect of payments authorised at the last meeting. The other payments made were as follows: Cheque 438 – reimbursement of Clerk for postage and stationery. Cheque 440 – repairs to climbing frame and slide and supply of 2 steel rods ordered by Grayham Rosamond. Cheque 441 – web site support August 2006 to September 2007. Cheque 442 – reimbursement of cost of hasp and padlock for new filing cabinet. Cheque 444 – playing field maintenance July to September. Cheque 445 – photocopying, faxing and stationery supplies. The foregoing payments were ratified. The periodic internal audit had been carried out by SC on 16 November 2007 and copies of his report had already been circulated to Councillors. DS thanked SC for the thorough job he was doing as internal auditor.

Playing Field

AS reported that a meeting of the full Playing Field Committee had been held on 29 October. It had been decided to go ahead with repair of the roundabout at a cost of £580 but to defer work on the safety surfacing to sweep this expenditure into a grant funding application. JA would be putting a request for suggestions for improvements into BVN. AS mentioned damage caused to the concrete bench during maintenance operations as a result of a hanging telephone cable. Having spoken to BT it appeared that a compensation claim was possible and AS was authorised to pursue this. CE had offered to fund a replacement once the outcome of the compensation claim was known. DS said he was anxious that the playing field development project should be progressed as soon as possible. AS said that her telephone number would be in BVN to enable parents and other interested parties to give their views. AS agreed to have a detailed proposal available for consideration by the PC at its March meeting and also mentioned a further maintenance day was planned for mid-March. RW asked why the renewal of the safety surfacing could not be done at once and AS said the Rospa report had said this was non-urgent. CE said that the playing field situation should be reviewed at the January PC meeting and if progress had stalled appropriate actions should be reconsidered. RW said he felt the work should be done at the earliest opportunity.

DAPTC

JA reported on issues discussed at the meeting held on 13 September, which had been poorly attended. A visiting speaker had spoken about planning issues and loss of defined development boundaries. Closure of BT phone boxes was discussed and their importance to areas with poor mobile phone signals was stressed. A decision on local Post Office closures was expected in the summer of 2008. The problem of large lorries using the A35 was discussed. The replacement of paper-based planning records by online access would mean that planning committee decisions would no longer be open to inspection at the WDDC offices. The Connecting Dorset project was progressing well. The importance of Parish Plans had been mentioned although Parish Polls were not recommended in view of the costs involved. CG outlined matters considered at the DAPTC AGM which he had attended on 3 November and DS thanked him for having represented the PC at this meeting.

BLAP

DS reported that he would be attending the forthcoming meeting but meanwhile had nothing to report.

Rights of Way

RL had nothing to report.

Village Hall

JA said that the resanding of the hall floor had taken place.

Highways

No report in the absence of DV. CG mentioned he had asked DV to look into the absence of a sign warning heavy vehicles against using Smacombe Lane to approach the village.

Web site

Nothing to report.

475. Correspondence

The correspondence log had been distributed and was largely self-explanatory. As regards item 119, the Clerk would return the precept application form to WDDC. As regards item 133, agreed JA would reply to Dorset Wildlife Trust agreeing to act as the local representative for the

Dorset Greenwood Tree project. DS suggested that individuals interested in item 126 should respond to the BLAP survey on access problems of young people and undertook to do so himself. JA reported she was unable to attend the meeting of the Jurassic Coast Forum and had no feedback.

476. To confirm the date for the next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 9 January 2008.