

MINUTES OF THE SILTON PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2026

1. **Present.** Mrs Diana Masters, Mr David Masters, Brigadier Robert MacGregor Oakford, Mrs Sue Harris, Mr Keith Harris, Mrs Shirley Rice, Mrs Wendy Harris, Mrs Jill Marsden, Mr George Harris, Mrs Sarah Hall, Mr Mike Hall, Mr Richard Bingham, Mr Rob Dyer, Mrs Gillian Baker Creswell, Mrs Lynda Woodhouse, Colonel Chris Woodhouse, Cllr Peter Williams.
2. **Apologies.**
 - 2.1 Mr Charles Peel, Mrs Jenny Peel, Mr Mike Metcalf, Mrs Michela Metcalf, Mrs Jackie Dyer, Cllr Belinda Ridout.
3. **Election of Chairman.** (This item was chaired by Chris Woodhouse)
 - 3.1 Diana Masters had chaired Silton Parish Meeting for more than 3 years and was willing to stand again, if elected. No other nominations or recommendations were proposed and Diana Masters was elected Chair for a further year. Proposed by Jill Marsden, seconded by Rob Dyer and carried unanimously.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.**
 - 4.1 A copy of the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 November 2025 had already been emailed to all those whose email addresses were known. There were no comments on the minutes or matters arising that were not on the agenda and they were duly signed off as a true record.
5. **Accounts.**
 - 5.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that last year the Parish certified itself exempt from having an audit carried out by an external auditor.
 - 5.2 The criteria for being able to claim exemption is that the Parish Meeting's gross annual income or expenditure is less than £25,000.
 - 5.3 However, an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) still has to be completed but only the Certificate of Exemption needs to be submitted to the external auditors not the whole Return.
 - 5.4 If a review by the external auditors is requested the Parish will automatically incur a bill for £210 plus VAT but if it chooses to exempt itself there will be no cost.
 - 5.5 There are 4 elements to the accounts that have to be voted on:

- a. The Certificate of Exemption which has to be agreed by the Meeting and signed by the Chair.
 - b. The Annual Internal Audit Report. The audit has been carried out by Cllr Peter Williams who has satisfied himself that the Parish Meeting complies with the relevant financial procedures and controls.
 - c. The Annual Governance Statement. This has been completed by the Chair but needs the Parish Meeting's approval that a sound system of internal controls is in place.
 - d. The Accounting Statement. This is a summary of the income and expenditure incurred by the Parish during the last 12 months. This has been audited by Cllr Peter Williams and found to be correct.
- 5.6 Approval was sought for each of the 4 elements:
- a. Certificate of Exemption. Proposed by David Masters, seconded by Rob Dyer and carried unanimously.
 - b. The Annual Internal Audit Report. Proposed by David Masters, seconded by Sue Harris and carried unanimously.
 - c. The Annual Governance Statement. Proposed by Keith Harris, seconded by Shirley Rice and carried unanimously.
 - d. The Accounting Statement. Proposed by Mike Hall seconded by Keith Harris and carried unanimously.
- 5.7 A copy of the balance sheet was circulated. The Chair emphasised that the account was in a healthy state with nearly £13,500 in the bank on 31 March with another £750 paid in, in April, part of this year's allotment fees.
- 5.8 Expenditure was very slightly down on last year and the account showed a small profit of just over £600. However, the Meeting was reminded that at the Extraordinary Meeting held in February 2023 it was agreed to provide £2,500 towards the cost of refurbishing the Village Hall outbuildings, the Wyndham Project. From this sum £1099 has already been spent, the cost of the Permitted Development Application, the Biodiversity Mitigation Plan and Planning Applications.
- 5.9 The Chair also drew the Meeting's attention to the bank service charges of £61.31. This had come about by a change in policy by Lloyds Bank and with effect from 14 January last year the Parish now has to pay a £4.25 standing charge every month and also incurs charges for every transaction made on the account.
- 5.10 The implications of these charges had been discussed with DAPTC who confirmed that most banks now impose similar charges and their advice was to let it run for a year or so to determine the impact before considering making any changes. They suggested that the most sensible option would be to build these fees into the precept.

- 5.11 Cllr Williams was thanked for his work in auditing the accounts once again.
- 5.12 There were no further comments on the accounts. Approval was proposed by Rob Dyer, seconded by Mike Hall and carried unanimously.

6. Risk Register.

- 6.1 This was updated by Keith Harris, Mike Hall and Chris Woodhouse on 31 March. Copies had been emailed to members before the Meeting. Approval was proposed by Rob Dyer, seconded by George Harris and carried unanimously.
- 6.2 Chris Woodhouse informed the Meeting that maintaining a Risk Register was a requirement of the Parish Insurance policy and was particularly important when events such as beacon parties and BBQs were being arranged.

7. Assets Register.

- 7.1 This had been emailed to members before the Meeting. It includes the "Woodhouse", the telephone box, the defibrillator, the deer management High Seat and also a projector, screen and the necessary electrical connectors for the projector.
- 7.2 The defibrillator was commissioned in May 2023 and is registered with the SW Ambulance Service. Access can be obtained by ringing 999 which will then provide the access combination. This combination is also published on the notice board in the Village Hall.

8. Precept.

- 8.1 The current precept stands at £3200, £1600 paid to the Parish Meeting every 6 months. The last increase was agreed on 20 May 2025.
- 8.2 The Chair reminded the Meeting that annual payments are made to both the PCC and the Village Hall each of £1000. In addition, there is the cost of the Insurance premium which is now over £550 each year. Added to that are the new bank charges which this year amounted to just over £60.
- 8.3 Taking all this into account the Parish is left with less than £600 each year for all other expenditure although it does receive about £750 each year from the allotment holders and another £250 from dog walking.
- 8.4 After a brief discussion, it was decided that a further increase to the precept was not justified. Proposed by Mike Hall, seconded by Rob Dyer and carried unanimously.
- 8.5 Rob Dyer commented that as £2500 had already been pledged towards the Wyndham Project could more Parish Meeting funds be used to help fund this Project. Chris Woodhouse agreed to investigate this. *Afternote: Additional funding for the Wyndham Project by the Parish Meeting is permissible.*

9. Planning applications and correspondence.

- 9.1 **One.** The Parish had received a Notification of Appeal against Dorset Council's decision to refuse permission for a stable block and tack room to be built in the field opposite Landshire. The Meeting was reminded that in 2022 approval had been given for the landowner to erect a wooden stable block and tack room in this field. However, no attempt had been made to do this, instead three attempts had been made to build more substantial buildings in the field all of which have been refused planning permission. In addition, some 8 meters of hedgerow have been removed, a new aluminium gate spanning some 30 feet had replaced the original field gate and three shipping containers had been placed in the field, all without planning permission.
- 9.2 Comments on the Appeal are required by 15 May and the Parish will be submitting theirs in time to meet this deadline.
- 9.3 **Two.** Approval had been given to demolish the old Village Hall outbuildings and replace them with a new building to provide an additional meeting room and secure storage space. This is the Wyndham Project which was discussed as a separate agenda item later in the meeting.
- 9.4 **Three.** A planning application had been received to demolish the bungalow and garage in Dunn's Lane and replace them with new, modern buildings on a similar footprint. This has been supported by the Parish and a decision is now awaited from Dorset Council.

10. Highways Matters.

- 10.1 Nothing of significance to report.

11. The Wyndham Project.

- 11.1 The Chair reminded the Meeting that this subject had been discussed in some detail at the last meeting. However, she was now in a position to update the Meeting on progress to date.
- 11.2 There are three parallel strands of work:
- a. **One.** David Masters has been leading on Strand 1, getting a new 50-year lease for the Village Hall agreed with the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). This strand is now complete and the new Trustees for the Village Hall are Rob Dyer and Mike Hall.
 - b. The cost of the new lease will be £625 plus VAT but the invoice has not yet been received.
 - c. **Two.** Peter Williams, assisted by Mike Burroughs, has been leading on Strand 2, seeking planning permission for a change of use of the outbuildings, changing them from dilapidated storerooms to a usable

meeting room with secure storage space. Approval was received on 8 Jan 2026 and is valid for 3 years.

- d. In addition, planning permission has been received to provide an alternative home for the bats presently living in the outbuildings. Permission was granted on 9 Sep 2025 and is valid for 3 years.
- e. **Three.** Chris Woodhouse, assisted by David Desborough, is leading on Strand 3, writing the Business Case and exploring how we are to raise the money required, possibly in the region of £250,000. Further work on this has been paused at present until clarity can be provided on when the project can start.
- f. However, a meeting has been scheduled with Caro Hart on 16 May to explore possible sources of funding for the project. Caro is a consultant working for the Dorset Community Action Group and among other things organised the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund and controlled the grants given to applicants to that fund.
- g. So far as funding is concerned the Parish has pledged for £48,500 already so on the face of it a further £200K still needs to be raised. However, when the Village Hall was last refurbished and the new kitchen and toilets built in 2004 the architect's estimate for the work involved came to £193,000 but the actual bill was less than £90,000. This saving was largely due to the good offices of Manor Farm, their machinery and plant and a great deal of self-help and it is hoped the Parish will be able to call on this again.
- h. Once the meeting with Caro Hart has taken place the next step will be to brief the Project Steering Group and then call an Extraordinary Parish Meeting to enable everyone to comment on the way forward.

12. Village Hall Recreation Field.

- 12.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that the only activity that had taken place on the field since the last meeting that is controlled by the Parish Meeting is dog walking which is now run on a structured basis and charges regular dog walkers £20 a year for those who do not live in the village. (£10 for Blue Badge holders). Village residents are clearly not charged to use their own field. This activity raised £250 for the Parish this year.
- 12.2 The Chair emphasised that the field is of course used for a wide variety of other activities which would be reported on at the Village Hall AGM.

13. Allotments.

- 13.1 The Annual Allotment Meeting was held on 4 April and was attended by more than 20 plot holders. The Parish has 44 plots in total and presently all are rented out at £20 per plot per year.
- 13.2 Fees for this year are still being collected but so far £750 had been banked with a little more still to come.
- 13.3 The Chair informed the Meeting that the prize awarded to the allotment holder who had improved their plot the most during the year was won by Sam Reynolds.
- 13.4 Thanks were expressed to Keith Harris for cutting the grass and the hedges and for all the work he carried out during the year to keep the allotments looking as good as they do. Also to Kevin Lane, the Allotment Warden who manages the allotments on a day-to-day basis and provides a great deal of useful advice to all allotment holders.
- 13.5 Keith Harris confirmed that the owl box now has new barn owl tenants but the number of chicks are not yet known.

14. Footpaths.

- 14.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that the footpath leading to the Doctor's Surgery will shortly need clearing once again and this is scheduled for 27 June.
- 14.2 She informed the Meeting that the rails are now broken in places and this has been reported to the Chief Ranger, Graham Stanley. However, there is a dispute between Highways and Dorset Council as to who owns the ramp and the steps down to the road. It is thought Highways may have accepted responsibility for the ramp, which will include the rails, and Dorset Council the steps but this has not yet been confirmed.
- 14.3 Jill Marsden commented that the broken rails now constitute a safety hazard and Chris Woodhouse confirmed that he had emphasised this in a recent email to Graham Stanley.

15. Himalayan Balsam.

- 15.1 The Chair reminded the Meeting that this will come into flower again in July/August and will need tackling once again if the Parish is to keep on top of it. This year's Balsam Bash will take place on Saturday 18 July starting at 1000 at the Village Hall. Volunteers are always welcome.

16. Commonwealth Day.

- 16.1 This was celebrated on Mon 9 March and was attended by some 12 parishioners. The Chair read out the King's message to the Commonwealth and Cllr Peter Williams read out the Commonwealth Affirmation on behalf of the PCC. The flag was then raised and flown all day.
- 16.2 Following the raising of the flag those attending moved into the church for a glass of bubbles to seal the event. It was agreed we should participate in this ceremony next year.

17. Parish Website.

- 17.1 Mike Hall gave details of the number of "hits" the website had taken over the last 12 months. He also announced that Jan Francis would take over from him the task of updating the website. Jan will need a short time to familiarise herself with the mechanics of how this is done and when the handover is complete this information will be shared with the Parish.

18. Dorset Council Matters.

- 18.1 Belinda Rideout's Ward Report for April had been circulated recently. There were no comments that needed to be passed to her.

19. Any Other Business.

- 19.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that the SOFOS Plant Sale held on 9 May had raised £1127.90.
- 19.2 Sue Harris reminded the Meeting that the Village BBQ will take place at the Village Hall on Friday 7 August.
- 19.3 Rob Dyer asked if Highways could be contacted to repair the road barrier outside his house that had been damaged some months ago and now presented a danger to motorists. Chris Woodhouse agreed to contact Highways.
- 19.4 Gillian Baker Creswell reported that dead crustaceans had been seen in the area of the ford and wondered who this should be reported to. Chris Woodhouse agreed to investigate.
- 19.5 Sarah Hall reported that the footpath adjacent to Silton Lodge, believed to be N70/22, is very overgrown and is almost impassable. Chris Woodhouse agreed to investigate and report it to the Rangers.
- 19.6 It was reported that a gate had been placed across footpath N70/17 behind the Village Hall. Chris Woodhouse agreed to investigate and ensure it is not causing an obstruction to the footpath.
- 19.7 Sarah Hall reported that the bridge over the river on footpath N70/6 was taped off, possibly in preparation to it being repaired. Keith Harris informed

the meeting he had reported that the bridge was damaged some months ago and it seems that action is now being taken.

- 19.8 Jill Marsden informed the meeting that the right of way, N70/3, that ran in front of her house was frequently blocked by “walkers” leaving their vehicles unattended and blocking the right of way.
- 19.9 David Masters informed the Meeting that he had found an old OS map (1883) of Silton which Peter Williams had copied and reduced in size for ease of handling. If anyone wanted a copy he could provide one for the sum of £5 to cover the costs.
- 19.10 There being no other business the Meeting closed at 1845.