

**MINUTES OF THE SILTON PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE
VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 20 MAY 2025**

1. **Present.** Mrs Diana Masters (Chair), Mrs Lynda Woodhouse, Mrs Sue Harris, Mr Keith Harris, Mrs April Browell, Mr David Masters, Mr Mike Metcalf, Mrs Michela Metcalf, Mrs Wendy Harris, Mrs Marian Honnywill, Mrs Jill Marsden, Mrs Shirley Rice, Mr Dominic Flintan, Mr Tim Dutson, Col Chris Woodhouse, Cllr Peter Williams (Bourton Parish Council)

2. **Apologies.**
2.1 Gillian Baker Creswell, Mrs Sarah Hall, Mr Mike Hall

3. **Election of Chairman.** (This item was chaired by Chris Woodhouse)
3.1 Diana Masters had chaired Silton Parish Meeting for more than 2 years and was willing to stand again, if elected. No other nominations or candidates were put forward and Diana Masters was elected Chair for a further year. Proposed by Sue Harris, seconded by Jill Marsden 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 12 November 2024, 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 £200 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 Mike Metcalf and carried unanimously
 - b. The Annual Internal Audit Report. Proposed by Jill Marsden, seconded by Michela Metcalf and carried unanimously.
 - c. The Annual Governance Statement. Proposed by Sue Harris, seconded by Jill Marsden and carried unanimously.
 - d. The Accounting Statement. Proposed by Mike Metcalf, seconded by David Masters 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 £13,000 in the bank on 31 March with another £770 paid in on 8 April, part of this year's allotment fees.
- 5.8 Expenditure was slightly down on last year and the account showed a small profit of £370. 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 £865 has already been spent, the cost of the Permitted Development Application, the Biodiversity Mitigation Plan and the Planning Application.
- 5.9 The Chair also drew the Meeting's attention to the £4.25 bank service charge. This had come about by a recent change in policy by Lloyds Bank. With effect from 14 January this year the Parish now has to pay a £4.25

standing charge every month and will incur 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 Mike Metcalf, seconded by Shirley Rice 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 David Masters, seconded by Michela Metcalf and carried unanimously.

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 used for presentations.
- 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 £3000, £1500 paid to the Parish Meeting every 6 months. The last increase was agreed at the Meeting held on 12 November 2024.
- 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, this year, has been raised to more than £550 an increase of £130. Added to that, it is estimated that the new bank charges will add at least a further £100 each year to Parish expenditure.
- 8.3 Taking all this into account the Parish is left with less than £400 each year for all other expenditure although it does receive some £800 each year from the allotment holders and another £300 from dog walking.
- 8.4 After a detailed and considered discussion, it was proposed to raise the precept by £200 which will come into effect in the next FY. Proposed by Keith Harris, seconded by Mike Metcalf and carried unanimously.

9. Planning applications and correspondence.

- 9.1 **One.** An application had been received from Feltham Farm to carry out alterations to an existing silage clamp and the erection of buildings to cover the clamp to protect it from rain. **This had been supported.**
- 9.2 **Two.** The Parish had also received an application to create a new concrete yard area at Feltham Farm to be laid adjacent to the existing silage clamp to reduce the risk of

pollutants such as dirty water and slurry from contaminating the clamp. **This had also been supported.**

- 9.3 **Three.** A third application had also been received from Feltham Farm that proposed the erection of 4 covered agricultural buildings to reduce the risk of rainwater mixing with the slurry. The aim is to reduce the levels of ground surface water and improve and reduce slurry levels and slurry management allowing the separation of water, slurry and foul water. **This had also been supported.**
- 9.4 Chris woodhouse informed the Meeting that these three applications by Feltham Farm were as a result of changes to regulations imposed by DEFRA. Even so, planning permission was required for all of them.
- 9.5 **Four.** The Parish recently received an application to convert the outbuildings at Silton Village Hall into a usable meeting room, The Wyndham Project. **This had been supported and subsequently had been approved.**
- 9.6 **Five.** The Parish received notice of a planning request for Dorset Council to determine whether or not Prior Approval might be required for a proposal to turn the Bungalow on Dunns Lane into a 4 bed two storey house. **The Parish had concerns about this proposal, had expressed these to Dorset Council, and await a response.**
- 9.7 **Six.** The Chair informed the Meeting that a new 30-foot-wide gateway had appeared in January on Church Road opposite Landshire. In addition, some 7 metres of established hedgerow had been grubbed out make room for the gates. She also informed the Meeting that just inside the gates there are 3 shipping containers that had recently been moved nearer the gates.

- 9.8 The Meeting was reminded that the owner had already had two applications to build in this field rejected and the Parish was concerned that a further application could be forthcoming. Chris Woodhouse had spoken to Cllr Belinda Ridout, our County Councillor, and on her advice had submitted a Planning Enforcement Notice as it was not believed that planning permission had been given for either the hedge to be grubbed up, the new gates to be put in or indeed for 3 shipping containers to be located in the field.
- 9.9 Tim Dutson informed the Meeting that in all probability permission was not required for the shipping containers as they were essentially mobile. As he lives very close to this site he agreed to inform the Chair of any developments taking place on this site.
- 9.10 **Seven.** Although not strictly Silton business the Meeting was informed that the developers who wanted to build 30 new houses at Sandways Farm in Bourton had now appealed against Dorset Councils refusal and comments were due to the Council by 12 June.
- 9.11 Cllr Williams expanded on this issue and also on a number of other sites in Bourton where despite opposition from both the Parish and County Councils developers have successfully appealed against these decisions.

10. Highways Matters.

- 10.1 The Chair thanked Bourton Parish Council for their help in tidying up the footpath and clearing the gutter in the area of the A303 flyover.

11. 80th Anniversary of VE Day 8 May 2025.

- 11.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that unfortunately, the Parish had had to scale back the original plans to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. However, the beacon had been lit on 8 May at Manor Farm to celebrate this event. The beacon was located at the highest part of the farm, close to where the beacon had been lit to celebrate the late Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday in 2016. It is understood 8 other beacons were visible that evening and the event was attended by about 20 people.
- 11.2 The Chair thanked Keith and Sue Harris for organising the event.

12. The Wyndham Project.

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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). The new lease was received from DBF on 1 April and signed at the APCM meeting held on 2 April. The new Holding Trustees for the Village Hall are Rob Dyer and Mike Hall. David Masters tendered his resignation as the sole surviving Holding Trustee at the APCM meeting.
 - b. The legal costs of this new lease, payable to the DBF solicitors, had been quoted at £750 plus VAT. However, David Masters had managed to get this reduced to £625 plus VAT, a very welcome saving.

- 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 and a patio where the garden is presently situated.
- d. Our Planning Application had been considered by Dorset Council and approval was given on 29 April and will be valid for three years.
- e. The Chair went on to say that we are now in the process of putting together and submitting a planning application for the bat mitigation measures needed. This will be an extension to the existing “Woodhouse” and this work is being carried out by Stephen Way, the architect who successfully steered our planning application for the outbuildings.
- f. **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 upwards of £120,000. Further work on this has been paused at present until clarity can be provided on when the project could start.
- g. So far as funding is concerned the Parish has pledged for £57,500 already so on the face of it a further £60,000 still needs to be raised. However, when the Village Hall was last refurbished and the new kitchen and toilets built in 2004/5 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 that the Parish will be able to call on this again.

13. Michela Metcalf asked where the additional funds might be found. Chris Woodhouse explained that there were several possible sources for projects of this type:
 - a. Dorset Council Capital Leverage Fund. Applicants can apply for a capital grant of between £1,000 and £25,000 to fund up to 20% of total project costs.
 - b. Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). This organisation supports all 10,000+ Village Halls in England and runs similar funding opportunities to the Capital Leverage Fund.
 - c. The National Lottery and other similar funds.
14. Keith Harris reminded the Meeting that the estimated costs for the Wyndham Project are now more than 2 years old and needed to be updated. He estimated the costs at nearer £200,000 rather than £120,000. He also expressed concern at the planned design of the new build as it afforded very little headroom and wondered if it might not be more sensible to demolish the outbuildings altogether and construct a new building, in keeping with the present Village Hall.
15. Following a constructive discussion it was agreed that the Wyndham Project Steering Group should meet to discuss the way forward. Chris Woodhouse will convene a further meeting in due course.
16. **Village Hall Recreation Field.**
 - 16.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that about the only activity that had taken place on the field since the last 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 nearly £300 for the Parish

- 16.2 Suzette Wilmot has now taken over the task of keeping our dog walkers, and others, who use the field in hand.

17. Allotments.

- 17.1 The Annual Allotment Meeting was held on 5 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.
- 17.2 Fees for this year are still being collected but so far £770 had been banked with a little more still to come.
- 17.3 The Chair informed the Meeting that this year, for the first time, a prize was awarded to the allotment holder who had improved their plot the most during the year, The prize was awarded to Steve Guppy and was very well deserved.
- 17.4 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.

18. Footpaths.

- 18.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that the footpath leading to the Doctor's Surgery will shortly need clearing once again and the rails leading up from the road need repairing. Last year the footpath was cleared in July but no repairs were carried out to the railings and they are now in danger of collapsing in places.

- 18.2 She went on to say that the metal bridge spanning the river adjacent to Silton Mill had been badly damaged in the storms earlier this year and cannot be repaired. It will shortly be replaced.

19. Himalayan Balsam.

- 19.1 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. Chris Woodhouse will circulate further details of the balsam bashing programme nearer the time.

20. Commonwealth Day.

- 20.1 This was celebrated on Mon 10 March and was attended by some 20 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 by Geoff Hacker and was flown all day.
- 20.2 Following the raising of the flag those attending moved into the church for a glass of bubbles to seal the event.

21. Parish Website.

- 21.1 Update to follow

22. Dorset Council Matters.

- 22.1 Belinda Rideout's Ward Report for April had been circulated recently. Any comments will be passed on to her

23. Any Other Business.

- 23.1 The Chair informed the Meeting that there had been some discussion about the Parish purchasing a community grit bin to be located near the Village Hall. Keith Harris explained that each winter he placed a container of salted grit on the verge near Landshire where there is a steep incline. He estimated that he had sufficient grit for one more year.
- 23.2 If the Parish bought its own grit bin this will cost approx £130 and an additional £90 to fill it. It was decided to defer this matter until the Autumn Meeting.
- 23.3 The Chair informed the Meeting that the SOFOS Plant Sale held on 17 May had raised more than £950.
- 23.4 April Browell informed the Meeting that the SOFOS Boat Trip will take place on Monday 14 July on the Kennet and Avon canal starting at Bradford on Avon. There will be a picnic on board provide by SOFOS and drinks will be available from the bar on board. Anyone wishing to join the boat trip should contact April Browell.
- 23.5 Sue Harris reminded the Meeting that the Village BBQ will take place at the Village Hall on Friday 29 August
- 23.6 Chris Woodhouse informed the Meeting that some amendments needed to be made to the Parish Meeting Standing Orders. He would make these amendments, circulate them for comment and get them approved at the Autumn Meeting.
- 23.7 Both Keith Harris and Cllr Peter Williams thanked the Parish Meeting for the financial support provided for the Village Hall and the upkeep of the graveyard respectively.