

**MINUTES OF THE PIMPERNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL,
7.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 23rd APRIL 2025 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
PARISH COUNCIL**

42 Members of the Public were present.

1. Apologies – Fiona Waller, Derek Andrews.

2. The Chairman, Mr Peter Slocombe, welcomed all to the meeting.

There followed a presentation by Anona Dawson from the Dorset Wildlife Trust:

Anona Dawson introduced herself as the Wilder Communities Officer for the Dorset Wildlife Trust, she works on community green projects in both urban and rural areas in Dorset. Anona had recently visited the former school field in Pimperne at the request of Cllr Martin Strange. Anona observed that there had been some saplings planted in the 4 corners of the field, however she felt that more planning was needed before further planting or changes were made to this green space. It was noted that some of the saplings had been vandalised, Anona expressed that if this had been done by children the saplings would have been broken by hand, but noted as they had been cut with secateurs this action was taken purposely by an adult concerned that the placing of the sapling may obscure light from their property when they were fully grown. Anona stressed that it is advantageous to involve the community surrounding the field before any further planting or changes are made, as they would be more likely to take greater ownership of the space and be more protective of any plants or trees. It was also pointed out that it is illegal to damage trees on other people's land.

-Suggestions for the field were further tree planting, wildflower and meadow area (which would need to be carefully managed and maintained), a pond, improvement to the hedging, a community space with picnic tables, and possibly the refurbishment or replacement of the pergola. It was also suggested that the tarmac areas be refurbished and the snakes and ladders and other games painted on this surface be redone for the enjoyment of the smaller children in the village.

Anona stated that we are a nation of wildlife lovers, however we have a pollinator crisis in the UK, we in the 10% biodiversity in the world, pollinators are dwindling, there have been a 54% decline in the past few years. Introducing the wildflowers and keeping the grass longer in places in the field will increase pollinators and wildlife to the area.

Anona asked whether the community was concerned about vandalism in the field and suggested that benches with artwork designed by the children from Pimperne Primary School in the benches would be one idea, in other projects that she had been involved with, these benches were cherished and seldom vandalised.

-It was suggested that a further meeting be called involving a greater number of the local community including those living directly around the perimeter of the field.

-It was suggested that any changes to the field be mapped out to ensure the best use of the space.

Questions from the floor then followed:

Q: Pond sounds lovely but there are health and safety issues with a pond? Yes, there are H&S issues with a pond, other villages have fenced around their ponds which is not ideal, also and life belts have been installed.

Q: A resident who lived in a property around the field stated that when the grass had been left unmown previously she had noted more butterflies and would welcome this if it was implemented.

3. The Chairman presented his annual report.

Tonight's meeting is the 131st Pimperne Annual Parish Meeting and it is my pleasure to present a report on the Parish Council's work over the past year. The Parish Council's work is carried out by your elected representatives who are all unpaid volunteers and work hard to safeguard the interests of our parish. Thus the Parish Council is the cheapest form of authority, although still being the first tier of local government. Close adherence to The Code of Conduct and Standing Orders is observed by the Parish Council, with finances strictly audited both internally and externally. We have one part time employee our Parish Clerk, Mrs. Jan O'Connell. Jan deals with all our Parish matters with speed and efficiency and in addition, handles parish finances in her role as Responsible Finance Officer. Jan prepares the accounts for internal audit by our Internal Auditor, Mr John Paul and external audit.

The Parish Council is indebted to Jan for her conscientious service in resolving parish matters in good time and good humour.

The election held on 2nd May last year was contested with the result that four new members of the Parish Council were welcomed to their first meeting on the 15th May.

Cllr Carole Beckford was appointed Communities Officer. Carole has carried out this role with vigour and enthusiasm with considerable effort expended in clearing and cleaning the Salisbury Road, bus shelter, checking all of the grit bins and regular inspections of the play areas.

Cllr Martin Strange was appointed Tree Officer and has executed this role with a high degree of care and attention to detail. Martin joined the working group investigating future use of the former school field together with Cllrs Steve O'Connell and John Tanner.

Cllr Steve O'Connell was appointed as our Parish Council's representative to meetings of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils. As a highly experienced Councillor Steve's experience and opinions are both valued and respected.

Cllr Martin Richley was appointed as Transport Officer and has taken responsibility for dealings with Damory bus services.

I am sure we would all wish to thank Martin for his hard work and dedication in producing the Pimperne Village News. We thoroughly appreciate the quality content and photographs that Martin puts together for each edition of the village news.

Cllr Antony Argles was appointed Highways Officer and Rights of Way Officer. Antony is active and vigilant in the execution of both roles with regular inspection of our roads and footpaths with constant reporting of defects on the Dorset Council website. Antony walks our many rights of way, taking care of any clearance work together with reports to Dorset Rangers if required.

Our Vice Chairman and Flood Warden, Cllr John Tanner carries out his role with distinction ensuring adequate sandbag provision is available when required. John ensures sewage spill occurrences in Church Road are immediately brought to the attention of Wessex Water.

We are indebted to Mr Alan Lukins for stockpiling our winter grit supply and filled sandbags in addition to regular cutting of the grass and hedgerows to the former school field. As a true community service Alan carries out this work with no charge to the parish.

A review of the minutes of Parish Council meetings over the past year reveals the diverse topics discussed. This time last year we were looking forward to the Planning Inquiry for the 490 dwellings Wyatt application scheduled for 8th October 2024. The application included 130 dwellings located on farmland within the Parish of Pimperne. As a necessary requirement of the Planning Inquiry, Statements of Case were under preparation by our Planning Consultant and legal counsel. However, the new Secretary of State appointed by the new government, issued a directive in July advising that the Government had decided not to "Call in" the Wyatt application. Thus the scheduled planning inquiry was cancelled. Subsequently, Dorset Council on 5th August, issued a decision notice approving the application, together with a S106 Agreement failing to benefit the Parish of Pimperne in any way whatsoever. In reaching this decision, Dorset Councillors serving the Northern Area Planning Committee failed to give the required weight to the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan, (which had been reviewed in 2022), the huge number of objections lodged by the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England. Wyatt have recently made application for a further 33 dwellings, located between Bolney and Greenbanks on the A354 at Letton. This is a further breach of Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan's policies concerning the number of new dwellings required and the non-adherence to the 'Open Gap' clearly outlined in the plan. The Parish Council has objected in the strongest possible terms to the application and has requested that it should be considered at a meeting of Dorset Council's Northern Planning Committee. I shall be raising our objections at the planning meeting within the three minutes allocated to us. There will be further objections raised by others during their three minutes speaking time.

The Section 106, Developer Contribution in connection with the development at Home Field still has finance available to the Parish Council for community amenities such as play areas. We are currently preparing an application for expenditure in constructing the remaining section of the basketball court in the Multiplay area. It is now eleven years since the first request was submitted to the then, North Dorset District Council for attention to the former Methodist Chapel and Woodbury site in Chapel Lane. Both sites are eyesores and have severely dilapidated since 2014. Dorset Council have decided not to enact enforcement action despite numerous requests from the Parish Council. However the PC is currently preparing a request to DC to reconsider their refusal to issue a Section 215 Dilapidation Order.

Action has also been requested from DC requesting the completion of the landscaping work at the E.V. charging point facility on the A354 by the site owners, Instavolt.

A large amount of attention has been spent on highways items, with meetings between our Highways Officer, Cllr Antony Argles, DC and myself. Among the items we are endeavouring to have carried out are the white gates at parish/village entries on the A354, bus stop markings and stop installations near to the former Farquharson Arms, a pedestrian crossing to the Nursery and bus shelter, repeater signs, footpath depression in Church Rd, etc. etc.

You will remember the autospeedwatch camera positioned on the A354 close to the junction with Church Rd. This camera was promised by Mr David Sidwick, Police and Crime Commissioner. Regrettably, this camera together with the other eleven installed over the county proved ineffective and was removed.

Disappointment has been felt through the number of vehicles exceeding our 20mph speed limit. Speedwatch teams operating in the village have noted a considerable number of offending vehicles.

The PC wishes to thank DC Sherry Jespersen for her assistance dealing with highway items and her support to Pimperne at meetings of DC's North Planning Committee, especially during their consideration of the 490 dwellings Wyatt application and the Long House application.

Thanks are due to Sherry for her overall caring attitude to Parish problems with a view to future resolution. The Pimperne Poor Relief in Need Charity has continued to assist those recognised as needing help in the parish.

Turning to the former school field, our working group has reported to the council and enlisted the advice of Anona Dawson, Dorset Wildlife Trust. I am sure that Anona's advice will assist our aim in ensuring that the former school field continues as a valued community green space for all residents.

Our thanks are expressed to Mr Rob King for carrying out repair and maintenance work to PC assets. Mr King's urgent attention and care to many different requirements are thoroughly appreciated.

Patience and understanding are exemplified by our Clerk and all members of the council, please remember you are very welcome to attend PC meetings and raise any topic of local interest.

I would express my personal thanks to our Clerk and all members of the council for their support over the past year.

4. Dorset Councillor Report- Cllr Sherry Jespersen.

-Cllr Jespersen reported that creating 1000's of new homes is a priority of the new government, Dorset's housing targets have increased to 3219 per year which is double the previous target. The government is also stripping away powers of local governments to make planning decisions. The New Dorset Local Plan will set out where new housing will go, look at infrastructure, employment, community facilities, design and sustainability, so it is a crucial document. We wish new houses to be built with solar panels and EV charging points, however there is not currently planning policy to ensure that this happens, this must be written into the Local Plan which has been years in the making. I encourage all villages to join in the consultation on the plan which will be out later this year, current planning policies are not serving villages like ours very well, making it difficult to resist planning applications.

-Regarding Highways matter, I would like to remind all that DC looks after 2400 miles of road, fills 20,000 potholes each year and cuts all of the verges, therefore it is understandable that sometimes there are delays with these services as road safety issues are prioritised. The council does inspect the roads for defects, however anyone is able to report defects via the DC website.

The Blandford Day Care Centre and the Trinity Centre in Shaftesbury are under review as to whether they are still required. These services are crucial to those who need them, there is currently a campaign to keep these centres open, our MP Simon Hoare has got involved in this. There is a consultation on the DC website running until the 9th June, Cllr Jespersen urged all to make comment on how vital these services are.

-Public transport has been cut in rural areas, funds have been awarded to areas that already have bus services. Cllr Jespersen has raised the matter in cabinet that the rural areas of Dorset need to get their community transport back.

Q: Will the Dorset Local Plan include policy changes to ensure that new builds are planned with solar panels? Cllr Jespersen responded that there is a working group working on the plan who will be pushing for this to become policy in the new Local Plan.

5. Pimperne Primary School Report:

-September 2025 reception class will be the full number of children which will be the first time in three years.

-The Year 6 results are looking very good.

-The move to Hamwic Academy has been very positive, Hamwic are very supportive and are ensuring that the school continues to improve.

-Year 3 and 4 had a visit from a theatre company who gave them an insight into the life of Mary Anning.

-The school's music evening was a great success with children playing a wide variety of instruments including the cello and the violin.

The Year 6 girls netball team have made it to the final which will take place next week.

6. Flood Warden Report: John Tanner.

Until a few weeks ago I was going to shock you one and all by giving praise to Wessex Water that due to their pre-emptive actions parts of Church Road had not suffered blocked toilets and sewerage emerging from manholes and running into our stream. I was going to give thanks where thanks were due! However, a knock on my door alerted me to the eruption of unmentionable material spreading across their garden. A private

contractor was called and discovered a blockage in Wessex Water's pipework. This took several visits and specialised equipment to clear. Of course Wessex Water blamed the actions of miscreants for flushing into the pipework's unsuitable matter. My view is that a robust maintenance programme would eliminate such events.

Fortunately, we have not suffered a major flooding either ground water or surface water during this past year. Climate change of course is leading to more prolonged and heavier cloudbursts that are increasing the risk of surface water flooding along the A354.

Stocks for flood alleviation have been checked and found to be in need of replenishment mainly sandbags that over time have tendency to rot even when under cover. Thanks is given to Mr Alan Lukins for their storage. Our stream is fed by water from along New Field Rd this has been diminishing in recent years, however water from the A354 side of Pimperne has greatly increased entering the stream from the associated tributary.

Please gain access to the Environment Agency web site to be given advance warning of flooding events and much related additional information.

7. Pimperne Sports Society- Andy Jeffery.

-Andy expressed his thanks to Jackie Vacher for her support in £800.00 towards repairs for the pavilion through her recent quiz and bingo evenings. The pavilion needs quite a lot of work to bring it up to standard. Andy was awaiting several quotes for kitchen flooring, and for painting to be carried out inside and outside of the pavilion amongst other works. Andy expressed his thanks to Howdens who had donated a kitchen for a small fee, discussions are underway with Wessex Internet for the installation of WIFI at a reduced rate of £1.00 per month. A projector has been donated by the Blandford Rotary Club, plus £150.00 toward purchasing a screen, this will enable the Sports Society to have movie nights. The club also wishes to buy a TV for the clubhouse. Our future plans are to continue with the improvements to the clubhouse. Currently we have the Pimperne Youth FC, who will be renamed Pimperne United. We have the Pimperne Youth team, youth rockets teams who are under 10 years old and 2 under 7's teams. We are creating a men's senior side. The pitch has been well maintained and is nice and flat, the club is very well supported by parents.

9. Highways/Footpaths - Antony Argles.

-DC signs department are currently in the process of finalising the positioning of the white gates to be positioned at each end of the village.

Although the 20mph speed limit has been implemented within the village, there are still some vehicles speeding although the average speed has been reduced which is an improvement on what it used to be. The new dropped kerb at Fiveways has helped those walking along Church Rd with pushchairs, or on mobility scooters.

-Thank you to Colonel Oliver for allowing us to install 2 new kissing gates on his land, this has been appreciated by the many walkers who walk this circuit.

-I would also like to thank Derek Andrews and the speed watch team of volunteers for all their assistance in trying to get the vehicle speeds lowered in the village.

10. Community Transport –Martin Richley

-Bus stops position has now been agreed and are waiting for DC to install.

-There is a price cap on bus fares of £3.00 until the end of the year.

-Sadly, Nordcat have recently ceased trading, if you previously used Nordcat, contact Dorset Community Transport who may be able to help.

-The new forecourt at Salisbury Station is nearly finished, once this work is complete, we will revisit our request to get the bus to stop at Station.

11. Tree Report: Martin Strange

-Cllr Strange requested that villagers offer suggestions of where they may want trees planted in the village.

12. Home watch and Speed watch- Mr Derek Andrews.

-PC had not received an update from Derek as he is currently away, although he had submitted a report to the Spring Village News. The Chairman, as a member of the speed watch team stated that he was amazed at the speed some vehicles travel at on the A354, at the last speed watch conducted 23 speeding vehicles were noted during a 1-hour speed watch session.

13. The Village Hall Report -Cllr Peter Slocombe.

Hirings of the village hall have continued at a reasonable rate throughout the past year. The hall is now 33 years old, and it is essential to ensure that facilities are available to our hirers that are comparable to our competitors in the area. WIFI is now available in the hall courtesy of Wessex Internet at a reasonable rate. The Committee Room was redecorated by Debby Mackenzie, Tamsin Holloway and myself, together with a new floor covering to ensure a more comfortable environment. New aluminium entrance doors have been installed for security. The insurance claim in the sum of £1,200.00 in respect of the vandal damage on 11th November 2023 was finally paid, (less the excess charge). Our thanks to our Treasurer, Mr Joh Beckford for rigorously pursuing this claim and in addition dealing with the energy companies concerning their exaggerated bills. Our thanks to our Secretary, Mrs Debby Mackenzie for dealing with our administration matters.

Thanks are expressed to Tamsin Holloway and Jackie Vacher for clearing, cleaning up and tidying the hall storage areas. Jackie organises many community events at the hall, including quiz nights, bingo evenings, craft fairs and much else. Currently Jackie is organising a VE Day tea in the hall including music of the era. The proposed audio-visual system for the hall has encountered a number of problems. However, a further meeting with our installer, I'm sure will answer many queries raised.

The hall is run by volunteers, there is one part time paid cleaner Nicky Trew who visits twice per week. I am pleased to visit the hall on a daily basis to check everything is up to scratch.

Thanks are due to John and Joyce Tanner for organising the regular coffee mornings and to their many volunteers. The outreach Post Office visits every Friday morning and thanks are expressed to the volunteers running the coffee club. Everyone's efforts ensure that the Village Hall remains an integral feature of our Pimperne Community.

14. Communities officer – Carole Beckford.

-There had been a lot to learn over the past year, being a new Cllr, however the training course attended had been helpful. I have taken responsibility to inspect and report back on all equipment in both play areas, plus 10 benches and 9 grit bins in the village. I am also grateful to Mr King for carrying out all the necessary repair work. The play areas were independently inspected by The Play Inspection Company on 25th February
-The results of the inspection were good.

I have also been checking, clearing and cleaning the bus shelter on the A354.

15. Pimperne Community Champion for 2024-2025.

-Jane Willis was named as this year's Community Champion, for all of the time, effort and support that she puts into community affairs. The Chairman presented her with a framed certificate.

16. The Chairman invited any questions from the villagers present:

-Colonel Oliver wished to take this opportunity to thank the PC Chairman Cllr Peter Slocombe for all of his hard work on behalf of the parish and the community.

-A parishioner made comment that most dog owners are responsible and pick up after their animals, however it has been noticed that some people are leaving their dog poo bags in hedges, this is dangerous to horses, it was requested that all dog owners use the bins provided around the village.

-It was also requested that dog walkers keep their dogs on leads around horses. There have been 2 incidents recently where dogs have been off lead and have entered Colonel Oliver's field where his horses are and chased them around the paddock.

-An appeal was made on behalf of St Peters Church, this year the plan is to repair the north side of the roof of the church. We have been fundraising and have received contribution from Jackie Vacher' who has raised funds and also John and Joyce Tanner have raised money through their coffee mornings. There is a summer fair and cakes sales planned, however it was asked whether anyone in the village could come up with any fund-raising ideas.

The meeting ended at 8.27pm.