

MINUTES OF THE PIMPERNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2026 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL.

35 Members of the public present.

1. Apologies for absence: Dorset Councillor Sherry Jespersen, Cllr M Richley.
2. The Chairman, Mr Peter Slocombe welcomed all to the meeting.

3. The Chairman presented his annual report:

Welcome to the 132nd Pimperne Annual Parish Meeting. It is my pleasure tonight to present a brief report on the Parish Council's work over the last year. The Parish Council is composed of your elected representatives who are all unpaid volunteers and is the first tier of local government. The Council conforms to a strict Code of Conduct and is audited both internally and externally. We have one part time paid employee namely our Parish Clerk, Mrs Jan O'Connell. Jan carries out her duties with great efficiency and excellent humour. In addition Jan is the Council's Responsible Finance Officer preparing the accounts for internal audit by our internal auditor Mr John Paul, and agreeing the accounts our external auditors. Jan's positive contribution to parish life is emphasised by her ability to quietly negotiate through difficult procedures to ultimately benefit the community.

It seems such a short time ago that we faced the deluge of last winter's rains and subsequent flooding. I'm sure you will agree that our Vice Chairman and Flood Warden, Cllr John Tanner carried out his duties with distinction. With the able assistance of Mr Alan Lukins, John filled sandbags during flood conditions and positioned them as required. Further grit for the sandbags was obtained by Alan Lukins with John notifying Wessex Water concerning the foul sewage escape through manholes in Church Road. The flooding and sewage to the A354, Old Bakery Close and Church Road together with domestic properties affected were raised at the recent Flood Resilience Meeting hosted by Simon Hoare MP in this hall. The council have requested Mr Hoare to confirm the actions promised by the organisations attending the meeting, namely the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and Dorset Council. A response is currently awaited.

The flooding and sewage escape is reminiscent of similar occurrences in the years 2000 and 2014. The drop in organised by the Environment Agency last Thursday was poorly publicised with the result that members of the public attending the event were outnumbered by the representatives of the EA, Wessex Water and Dorset Council.

The flooding and general deterioration of Dorset's roads and footpaths has meant a busy year for our Highways and Rights of Way Officer, Cllr Antony Argles. Antony has been vigilant in inspecting and reporting defects to Dorset Council officers and rangers. Subsidence to the culvert adjacent to Church Lodge required urgent attention by Dorset Council with barriers initially erected by the Parish Council using cones and steel barricades from the village hall. The repair work carried out by Dorset Council will require further attention to correct the depressions and trip hazard.

At long last Dorset Council installed the white gates and new signs to the A354 after many months of waiting. Dorset Council refused our request for a form of pedestrian crossing to the bus stop and children's nursery.

We have objected to the large signs erected on the Instavolt charging station, the outcome of the retrospective application is awaited. We have requested additional 30mph and 20mph repeaters in a further attempt to reduce the speed on the A354 and within the village.

The licence agreeing occasional use of the village hall car park by school parents is currently being negotiated between the Parish Council and the Hamwic Education Trust.

The public consultation by Dorset Council for the new Dorset Local Plan and Local Transport Plan was completed on 31st October. The proposed residential development between Letton Close and Sunrise was a further breach of our Neighbourhood Plan.

The Tommy memorial currently installed between the plane tree and Church Road will probably be moved to allow for the provision of a suitable surround and setting for the memorial.

Our Communities Officer, Cllr Carole Beckford has inspected Parish Council property with diligence and thoroughness, reporting required attention on a regular basis. Carole has undertaken clearance and cleaning work to the A354 bus shelter which is an unpleasant task since you never know what you might come across inside the shelter. Maintenance work is usually undertaken by Mr Rob King whose work is acknowledged and admired throughout the year. Improvements are required to both the Junior Play Area and the Multiplay Area. An agreement has been secured with Dorset Council enabling expenditure of the remaining S106 Developer Contributions from the Home Field Development to finance a new roundabout, play area surfacing, replacement fencing and completion of the basketball court. Quotations are currently under consideration for this work.

You will remember that we had the pleasure of the company of Anna Dawson from the Dorset Wildlife Trust. Subsequently Anna was kind enough to attend our drop-in session to receive suggestions from the public concerning the future of the former school field.

Suggestions received were then incorporated in a drawing enabled by Debbie Streeter. The field now has been named, Pimperne Community Field and we are now working to achieve the planting and general layout as detailed in Debbie Streeter's drawing. Over 500 saplings have been planted, mainly to the boundaries with planting of mature trees donated by the Yellow Bus Project at Shillingstone. The Council's Tree Officer, Cllr Martin Strange has been actively involved in the project together with our planting volunteer group. The group will be assisting once more in the planting of 23 mature fruit trees for the Community Orchard. The trees have been purchased with the assistance of a grant from the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Cllr Strange carries out his duties as Tree Officer with close attention to detail and accuracy concerning the care of trees in the parish.

Our Transport Officer, Cllr Martin Richley undertakes the role with the necessary patience when dealing with the bus company and Dorset Council. Efforts have been made for a number of years to interest the bus company in routing their Service 20 to Salisbury via Salisbury Railway Station alas without success. Dorset Council agreed to establish permanent bus stops outside of the former Farquharson Arms. This promise was made nearly 2 years ago alas without fulfilment.

We are all indebted to Cllr Richley for preparing, collating and publishing Pimperne Village News. The vast amount of time and work that Martin expends on the Village News is fully appreciated with each issue receiving praise from every recipient. Our grateful thanks to Martin.

We remain members of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils whose meetings are regularly attended by our Cllr Steve O'Connell. Steve's vast experience of council work

is very well thought of together with his able and recognised experience of the planning process.

Moving on to planning, the Parish Council considered 13. no. full planning applications over the year. The developer, Wyatt Homes's application for a further 33 dwellings at Letton, between the houses named, Greenbank and Bolney went before the Dorset Council Planning Committee Northern area meeting at Sturminster Newton. The application was yet another breach of the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan. Parish Council objections to the application were voiced by Cllr Richley and me. Although the vote by Dorset Councillors at the meeting was far closer than before, the application was approved allowing the construction of another 33 dwellings at Letton in addition to the overall 490 dwellings approved previously. Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan had again failed to be given sufficient weight by Dorset Council.

There has been no improvement to the Woodbury/Former Methodist Chapel site in Chapel Lane. Dorset Council show no interest in granting a Section 215 Dilapidation Order on the site. The Parish Council have written to the landowner Mr Nicholas Mulholland, requesting that the site is returned to the good order in which it was purchased in 2014. No response has yet been received.

The Pimperne Relief in Need Charity has continued to issue goodwill gifts to the needy of the Parish in accordance with the rules of the charity.

Looking back over the past year the complexity of, and the length of time that has to be taken to resolve issues is no different to previous years and our Cllrs deserve credit for their patience and ingenuity. Having decided to support the Sports Society in their success at Priory Field, it took in depth research to establish that the sports pavilion could be assisted by public funding. Andy Jeffery and his team are to be applauded for their achievement in the brilliant improvement on Priory Field, with many junior sports teams benefiting from the success. In conclusion, we thank our Dorset Councillor Sherry Jespersen for her support and genuine interest in our parish.

We thank Jan O'Connell for her understanding and ability to resolve complex matters.

I express my personal thanks to Jan and my Councillor colleagues for their excellent support throughout the year.

4. Dorset Councillor Report: Cllr Sherry Jespersen.

I am sorry that I can not be at your Annual Parish Meeting this year, as always, I will be happy to follow up on any issues raised this evening.

Follow up to Flooding Meeting 19th March. At the meeting it was clear that Wessex Water are well aware of the longstanding sewage problems in the village. They seem to have a reasonable technical understanding of the underlying causes, not least the fact that most of the sewage network is pre-1960. They outlined their action plan for 2026-2027. In summary, this involves identifying cracks in the sewers and manholes and sealing them. John Tanner can provide more details as he has been in touch with Wessex Water. Residents are urged to continue to report all incidents to Wessex as their responses are data lead.

The Environment Agency explained their responsibility for issuing flood warnings and managing water courses. There remains a degree of uncertainty at community level about who is responsible for managing streams and water courses and what the public are allowed to do.

Dorset Council have agreed to improve the culvert in Church Road, this is made more difficult due to the proximity of the wall which is a heritage asset. We do not have the date for this yet.

Improvements to the culvert by the bridge would be a much larger project. Dorset Council set aside 5.6m capital for flood defence work and I wrote to the council outlining this project and requesting that it be considered for some of this capital funding. This is a Dorset wide fund so there will be many calls on it and no decisions will be made in this financial year.

You will be aware of the significant damage to road and verges resulting from the exceptional winter. Highways are repairing as quickly as they can. A number of residents have asked about the removal of the cats eyes, I am assured that these will be replaced.

Please continue to report all road defects on the Dorset Council website.

Simon Hoare MP undertook to contact Damory for assurance that they have a maintenance regime for the culvert on their land, which they do.

Two issues are still unresolved, Management of road closures in emergencies by Parish Councils or community groups. The council has agreed that certain PC's can hold road closed signs locally, but it is not clear under circumstances they have from DC to close a road.

And responsibility for Enforcement of closed roads remains problematic with police resources stretched in an emergencies. These are both Dorset wide issues which I will continue to press with Dorset Council, the police and our MP.

Planning matters: I have been asked about the current position of the planning application for 15 homes on the Franwill Estate. As can sometimes happen with small developments in villages it is proving difficult to find a social housing provider able to take on the proposed social housing. The developer is working with Dorset Council's Housing Enabling Team and the planning case officer to explore other forms of low-cost housing such as Discount Market Housing. It remains the intention to bring this development to fruition.

The signs erected at the Instavolt charging station were in breach of the existing planning permission, so Enforcement action was taken by Dorset Council. In line with usual practice a planning application was submitted, for smaller signs. Consent has been granted for these.

The existing signs must be removed by the end of May. Let the parish council know if this does not happen and we will follow this up.

5. Pimperne Primary School report submitted by Fiona Waller.

My sincere apologies for not making this evening's meeting. As I type this small extract of school life, our year 5 children are participating in a residential farm experience. An organic farm where chickens lay your breakfast, the veggie patch provides your dinners and home-made dough, and outdoor pizza ovens and campfires keep you well fed. In order to earn it – farm chores are in abundance. Of course, we add a little look into our curriculum too on this amazing experience and study rivers and organic farming, orienteering and food webs, predatory-prey relationships, lifecycles and hibernation, as well as human impact on wildlife. We feel privileged to offer our children 2 residential experiences whilst they are at primary school but the benefits are very much long lived.

For those of us not galivanting around Dorset, a typical week at school celebrates the success of reading and writing from our very youngest children to our oldest. Across the school we are seeking tremendous progress from our children. Teachers are focusing on the adaptive teaching strategies that are used to ensure a quality first teach for all pupils therefore being fully inclusive in our teaching. With sport, art, DT, computing, music, humanities and

personal development all happening, it never ceases to amaze me at the talents of not only our children but our staff too. The team spirit is alive and well here at our small oasis, in the corner of the village, as we truly aspire to live out our vision “As each one does their part, we grow in love”.

6. Flood Warden Report: Cllr John Tanner.

On the first day of the emergence of sewerage from the Manholes, Wessex Water was contacted and arrived in the village within 2 hours. As we have a history of reporting such events a file was consulted, and Wessex knew exactly the situation. Testing took place every day and it was determined that the level of pollution was low due to the degree of groundwater, rainwater and infiltration into the private pipes before entering the communal system. I asked the EA if they had tested the water independently, but they did not respond. It was explained that, if ingress did not take place there would be no outflow of sewerage because the amount of effluent does not vary from summer to winter, no emergence of sewerage takes place in the summer. If the sewerage network was not transporting flood water away from the village, flooding may well be increased. There needs to be a plan from all agencies to tackle this problem.

Water reached the top of the arch of the bridge over the A354 and emerged from the stream and across the A354. I placed my warning sign in the appropriate place to warn motorists and called DC to alert them of the situation. DC placed ‘Road Closed’ signs but very few motorists and lorry drivers took any notice. The police were called and me and another villager were informed that it was ‘none of their business’, and to contact DC. An accident occurred on the A354 when a manhole cover became dislodged due to water pressure, causing a van to have an accident, a one lane system was in place for several days. Sandbags were supplied to 3 households in the village, a bag of sand and sandbags were deposited at the end of Church Road and an alert given as to their location. The village owes Mr Lukins much grateful thanks for his assistance transporting sand and sandbags including driving into Blandford to collect an additional bag of sand at short notice.

Many houses I believe suffered from toilets that would not flush, other drainage difficulties and gardens flooded. One house at least suffered from ground water emerging through floorboards. There needs to be holistic approach to solving our situation.

On Thursday 29th March a meeting organised by the Parish Council and chaired by our MP with representatives from Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and DC. Many residents attended with lively discussion. It was ascertained that WW are drawing up plans to line their sewerage pipes. They are confident their portable water pipes are safe from ingress of ground water due to being under pressure. DC have further culvert works in their plan but so far no date. I attended a similar meeting in Blandford at the Corn Exchange last week, but this meeting was not as well attended as ours.

7. Pimperne Sports Society: Andy Jeffrey.

There have been new football teams created, including a Men’s first team, we are currently in talks to start an under 15’s girls team and for the 26-27 we will be merging the under 12’s with the under 11’s, and expanding the under 8’s. The football teams started with 9 boys and now we have over 70 players and 10 coaches, and there is more to come. We are looking at a deal with a supplier in Poole to supply match and training kit and gain sponsorship.

The Club House has started to gain funding over the past couple of months with thanks to Jackie Vacher for her support with fundraising and to the Parish Council for their annual grant to the Sports Society.

We have started to look at the new kitchen design for the Pavilion and are looking to re-paint the inside area with the help of volunteers. Phase II of the improvements will be to the outside area.

We are looking for a maintenance and grounds person, if anyone would like to assist with this please contact us on: pimpernesportsclub@gmail.com

8. Highways and Footpaths: Cllr Antony Argles.

We are happy to report that the White Gates have been installed to each end of the village again in an attempt to slow traffic down through the village on the A354, and we await an additional roundel to be painted onto the road at the Anvil Bend, towards the Salisbury end of the village. We appreciate that this will not solve the continuing issue of speeding traffic but the PC has now utilised everything available to them to tackle this problem.

Although the 20mph limit in the village may have slowed down the average speed of drivers, there are still problems in Church Rd and Anvil Rd during the school run times of day, and Arckles Lane and Down Rd with people going to the gym. However I will stress that it is not just gym users that are still speeding through the village.

Following the wet winter there are a lot of potholes which DC Highways are getting around to repair, please always report any potholes on the DC website, it is quite easy to do. I would like to thank Derek Andrews and the Speed Watch Team who are regularly out monitoring the speeds in the village.

Footpaths: The landowners are good at keeping the footpaths clear, the footpath to the camp is often a problem when it becomes overgrown and we have to contact the landowner. Thank you to Alan Lukins and all of the other landowners who keep the footpaths clear, we appreciate that.

9. Community Transport: Cllr Martin Richley: No current update.

10. Tree Report: Cllr Martin Strange.

We have planted over 500 saplings donated by the Woodland Trust in the Community Field, mostly around the hedgerows to fill in gaps. On the 10th May, further planting will take place around the hardstanding area at the Portman Road end of the field. Further saplings are due to be obtained from the Woodland Trust in November.

11. Speed Watch: Derek Andrews.

The Sunday Telegraph featured an item headlined 'Speed Watch, vigilantes or doing a good service to the community?' Dorset Police have an ambitious plan to reduce fatal and serious injuries by 25% over the next 6 years and they have stated that speed watch does help to deter speeding traffic even if it is only for the period of time that they are out. Often people query where we stand when conducting a speed watch, the volunteers have very strict restrictions on the locations they can use which are risk assessed by the Police. There has to be a step away area to avoid being targeted by vehicles, and they are not allowed to operate with a mile of a speed limit. Pimperne currently has 6 permitted areas for speed watch, 2 on the A354, Anvil Cottage and Yarde Farm, these areas can only be used when the SID (Speed Indicator

Device), is at the other end of the village. Other areas are Church Rd, Anvil Rd, Down Rd by the steps, and Stud Farm. We are unable to monitor Arlecks Lane as there is nowhere to put the team. There are also weather restrictions as we can not operate when it is raining or when the roads are wet. The Bushnell Radar device that we use is very good, if a car is spotted speeding the team has to take down the registration number/ make and model of the vehicle. We are not allowed to take photographs of cars. All of the information passed onto the police has to match, once the details are matched after a first offence a letter is sent, second offence a graver letter is sent and after the third incident the letter will be delivered by a policeman. We are currently looking for more volunteers to join the Speed Watch team, should you wish to put yourself forward to help please email the Clerk and she will pass your details on.

12. Village Hall Report: Cllr Peter Slocombe.

Pimperne Village Hall is nearly 35 years old and remains a successful hub for our parish community. We have an active committee meeting on a regular basis to agree on the future wellbeing of the hall. Hiring of the hall continues successfully with both regular and occasional users. Last month a very well attended meeting hosted by our MP Simon Hoare was a forum for our parishioners to question the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and Dorset Council on Flood Resilience.

The Village Hall is administered completely by volunteers, with the cleaner being the one person paid for her work. Debby Mackenzie administers secretarial work and Mr John Beckford attends to all Treasury requirements. Tamsin Holloway assisted by Becki Thomas has undertaken numerous works in the Committee Room such as reframing and fixing all our Best Village Certificates and clearance of overgrown shrubs to the planting area at the end of the hall. Jackie Vacher, in addition to organizing the very popular Bingo evenings, Quiz nights, fetes, craft sales and many events, has assisted in general village hall duties.

The hall will host a Gardens Open event on the 20th and 21st June this year, with Jackie organising the programmes, teas on the days and many other Gardens Open related items. Our monthly Social Club Coffee mornings continue on the third Saturday of each month organised by John and Joyce Tanner. Each month a worthy charity receives a donation from the coffee morning. Sadly the outreach post office which used to visit the Village Hall every Friday morning has ceased to operate. The new owner of the Child Okeford Post Office from which our former outreach operated, decided against continuing the outreach service to Pimperne. Fortunately, the Friday Coffee Club, operated by volunteers, decided to continue and remains popular with everyone.

Bookings for the hall continue to be taken by me, however, the computerised Hallmaster system is currently being installed which will enable hirers to book online having viewed the calendar on the screen. The Hallmaster system, in addition issues invoices to hirers as decided by our Treasurer, John Beckford.

Having been involved in our current and previous Village Halls for over 40 years, I would assure you that our Village Hall is viable and well maintained thanks to our wonderful band of volunteers.

13. Communities Officer: Cllr Carole Beckford.

As Communities Officer it is my responsibility to check both play areas every month and report any defects. My thanks to Mr Rob King who then makes the repairs. I also check the 10 benches in the parish, and clean the bus shelter which is often an unpleasant experience.

In winter I check the grit bins to ensure that have sufficient supplies to meet our needs should we have very bad weather.

The floor was then opened to the villagers present to raise any questions.

Q. Has the PC explored the possibility of having speed bumps installed in Down Rd/ Arlecks Lane?

A. Yes Pimperne Parish Council have previously raised this with Dorset Council Highways, unfortunately they will not permit or pay for speed humps in the village.

Q. Pedestrian and dog walkers are nervous about walking along Arlecks Lane as the traffic speeds and also sometimes has to reverse back out onto Church road when meeting oncoming traffic as there is nowhere to pass? What can be done about these issues.

A. Again this is an issue that has been raised many times with DC Highways, it was explored making it a one way but deemed that this would only increase the speed of traffic knowing that they would not meet any traffic coming towards them. Speed bumps again, DC Highways do not have the budget for these, and they are unpopular with residents that live close to them as they can be noisy. PPC are currently setting up a date for a meeting with DC Highways to walk around the village to discuss the various Highways issues.

Colonel Oliver wished to thank the Chairman Cllr Peter Slocombe for all of his hard work on behalf of the community.

It was with great pleasure that Pimperne Parish Council declared that this years' Community Champion is Mr. Alan Lukins. We thank Alan for all of his support to the community during the recent flooding event in Pimperne. Also for regularly mowing the Community Field and all of the other things he assists with around the village. Mr Lukins received his certificate from the Chairman.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20pm.