

CHILD OKEFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Child Okeford Parish Council Meeting held on 4th OCTOBER 2021 at Child Okeford Community Centre at 7.00pm

Present

Cllr. Mary Giles (Chairman), Cllr. Kirsty Baird (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Karen Knapton, Cllr. Sylvia Holdeman, Cllr. Tim Cotton, Cllr. Robert Smith and Cllr. Mark Kerridge.

In Attendance: Philippa Tandoh – Parish Clerk
Alan Blundell – Footpaths Officer
Cllr. Sherry Jespersen – Ward Councillor
3 Members of the Public

Apologies for absence were received from:

21.10.01 To Receive Declarations of Interest in Matters on the Agenda

- a. Cllr Mark Kerridge reports a pecuniary interest in planning application P/FUL/2021/02001, Melway House, Melway Lane, Child Okeford, DT11 8EW (Agenda item 21.10.08.b.i). The Chairman advises that Cllr. Kerridge will be asked to leave the meeting whilst this application is discussed.

21.10.02 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6TH SEPTEMBER 2021.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 6th September 2021.

Proposed: Cllr. K Knapton **Seconded:** Cllr. K Baird

21.10.03 To Discuss Matters arising from the previous Minutes

- a. The Clerk confirms that the actions from the last meeting have been completed. The website page discussed at the previous meeting has been removed. The Statement of Account heading for 'CORGI Allocated Reserve' has now been updated to 'Playground Repair Reserve'. Highways has been contacted regarding the various issues that needed to be reported at the last meeting, the Community Highways Officer is looking into the issues and the Clerk is awaiting a response.

21.10.04 Public Participation

a. Grant Request for Roof Repairs from Child Okeford Village Hall

The Village Hall Secretary introduces herself and the Treasurer of The Village Hall to the Parish Council. A pack of information is circulated to all Councillors and to the Clerk. The pack contains a specification of repairs completed in 2018 by the Village Hall Property Manager, 3 quotations for the works required and the projected annual income and expenditure budget for the period 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2018. Prior to the meeting, the Secretary circulated a written proposal detailing the grant request and the village hall accounts for the period 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2021. The Parish Council had requested a copy of a written survey; however, the Secretary advises the Council that although the Village Hall Trust had decided to have a survey completed, surveyors were

reluctant to complete the survey and the quotations were very high – an expense they felt they could not afford in the midst of the pandemic. A villager and local roofer was contacted and advised the Trust that the roof needs replacing, he was a qualified and experienced roofer but is not a qualified surveyor so an official survey could not be completed by him.

The Secretary concludes that the roof is now visibly poor from the exterior of the hall and even more tiles have been lost since the last meeting which is a significant health and safety issue. Photos were circulated which documents the damage. The Secretary advises the Council of the expected replacement cost of £50,000 and asks the Parish Council to lend their support and grant £5,000 towards the cost.

Cllr. Smith asks why the state of the roof was not considered when the extension was completed in 2015. The Secretary advises that she was not involved with the Trust at that point in time so was unable to comment. Another member of the public involved with the hall at that time, answers that although apparent that some work needed to be completed, the Trust were unaware of the extent at that time and that it did not need to be completed immediately.

Cllr. Smith notes that the Trust have received generous donations in the last year. The Treasurer confirms that two government grants of £10,000 and £8,000 were received. Cllr. Cotton asks the Secretary and Treasurer what the grants were for, and they reply that the grants were to compensate for the impact that the pandemic may have on their funds and lack of income in the previous year. It is believed they are offered to all qualifying village halls across the country.

Cllr. Smith also notes that the Trust currently has a healthy balance of around £42,000. The Treasurer confirms that recent lighting maintenance has taken place and the balance at the end of the previous month is around £38,000. The Trust are hoping to use £20-30,000 of their current funds towards the replacement roof and raise the remaining amount through donations or further grants. A maximum of £30,000 could be used to avoid depleting their reserves for any further maintenance. Donations of £1,500 have already been received from residents of the village. The Treasurer also confirms that the Trust are unable to reclaim any VAT for the works completed.

Cllr. Baird enquires if the Trust have explored community shares, a government scheme where the community put their donations to the village hall and receive match funding. However, it is agreed this may not be feasible as the hall is held under a trust.

Cllr. Smith suggests that any decision is deferred until the budget has been agreed for the next financial year and when the Council are approaching the end of their financial year in March to understand what they can afford to grant towards the hall. He notes that the Village Hall Trust currently has £18,000 more in reserves than the Parish Council and the Parish Council reserves are needed to potentially replace or repair costly items across the entirety of the village such as the monument, tractor or playground.

Cllr. Holdeman feels that the Village Hall is an integral part of the village and although it is financially sustainable, it is a community asset and feels that a grant from the Parish Council is justified and necessary.

Cllr. Cotton asks if the Trust have considered borrowing the money as the hall has a steady income. Members of the Parish Council and the Treasurer of the village hall conclude this would not be possible as the building is held in trust. Cllr. Cotton suggests that grants should be used as a last resort, if all other funding options have been exhausted as the Parish Council funds are taxpayer's money and caution should be taken when considering any grant requests.

The Secretary and members of the public report that they feel some Councillors oppose their request for the grant despite the hall being a village asset. The Chairman replies that the Council are not refusing the request for the grant but deferring the decision may be the best option to explore what is available within the budget at the end of the year. The Council are asking legitimate questions to understand the situation and agree a grant of £5,000 is a large request to the Council funds.

Cllr. Baird suggests that the Council could, at this point, offer the remaining £600 of grants within the budget. Once the budget for the next financial year is finalised and the Council can ascertain what budget remains unspent at the end of the financial year, a further grant could be considered.

The Village Hall Secretary advises the Council that the works are required to be completed in the Spring and the funds would be required beforehand.

Cllr. Kerridge reports that he feels that it is a justifiable request from the village hall as it is a village asset. He suggests that the precept could be increased to cover the cost of the grant, so it is spread across households in the village. Cllr. Smith reports that this would be a very significant increase and many residents would be upset at the large percentage increase alongside an anticipated Council Tax increase.

The Chairman concludes the discussion. She thanks the Secretary for her swift and sufficient response to the Parish Council's queries but notes that the Council would be unable to make a decision for the requested grant of £5,000 at the meeting. She suggests that the Council take time to consider the documents supplied by the Secretary, consider the budget, and defer discussion for a larger grant until a later date towards the end of the financial year. The Council will consider a grant of between £500-£1,000 at the next meeting in November.

ACTION: Clerk to add agenda item for grant of between £500 - £1,000 towards the village hall at the next meeting.

A member of the public reports that she feels happy to know that the Council could offer what it could at this point and is grateful that a small grant could be considered at this point.

21.10.05 Ward Councillors Report

Cllr. Jespersen updates the Parish Council that rather than issuing monthly reports, her reports are now quarterly hence the confusion as to why some of her previous reports have been missing from previous meetings.

Cllr. Jespersen recently attended a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner alongside the speed watch co-ordinator regarding highways safety. She reports there were lots of interesting points raised about community safety and is arranging meeting with Dorset

Highways to discuss the points further. Another meeting is expected to take place in the near future regarding rural crime.

Fuel shortage – Dorset Council is meeting regularly with emergency services to monitor impact of shortage, which is now beginning to improve within the local area. The advice from Dorset Council is to replenish your fuel as you usually would.

Dorset Council New Housing Register – A new housing register is due to be introduced. The deadline for those currently on the existing register to re-register on the new list has now been extended until 1/12/2021. Those on the current register have been sent written correspondence about this process but advises the public that if you have not yet re-registered, please do as soon as possible. The new register is more user friendly, easier to register and bid for properties.

Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Residents and land owners are encouraged to complete the consultation survey for feedback on all rights of way. The survey will help the Council understand the key issues that may need to be addressed and any location-specific concerns or ideas to help improve public rights of way. The results of the consultation will be considered towards a new rights of way improvement plan in Spring 2022. The survey deadline is 31st October 2021.

HGV Driver Shortage – The shortage of HGV drivers has impacted on litter bin and kerbside waste collections, particularly interruptions to garden waste collections locally. Cllr. Jespersen advises that if your waste has not been collected then please reports to Dorset Council through their website. Additionally, she reports that litter bins are currently looking very full as household collections are taking precedent. If you notice a litter bin is full, please take any litter home with you and report the full bin to Dorset Council through the website.

Planning Appeal Reference: APP/N1215/W/21/3279462 – In reference to the refusal of 65 houses opposite Gold Hill Business Park known as the ‘Leaper Land’ application. Cllr. Jespersen reports that there will be an appeal hearing, likely to take place in November in the Exchange in Sturminster Newton with dates and details to be confirmed. Any comments previously made by residents and the Parish Council will automatically be forwarded to the inspector automatically. Should the Parish Council or residents wish to make further comment, you can do so directly to the inspector. The application can be viewed on the Dorset Council planning website and any further comments should be sent to west1@planninginspectorate.gov.uk by 25th October 2021. Cllr. Jespersen advises the public and Councillors that the hearing will be open to the public, however, it is at the Inspector’s discretion if anyone should speak and would suggest that any comments are written in advance to the Inspector.

A Councillor asks Cllr. Jespersen about the proposed works at The Hollow as it was due to have works completed which were then postponed. Cllr. Jespersen confirms that the works are postponed and there was some confusion as to whether it was resurfacing or drainage works.

21.10.06 Footpaths Report and Tree Matters

a. Further discussion regarding the diversion of footpath N35/10

The Footpath Officer reports that the landowner has asked a local farmer to fence the unofficial footpath. A quotation has not yet been received from the landowner. The electric fence has recently been removed and some dog walkers are exercising their dogs in the middle of the field.

b. Footpath Officer's Report

The footpaths are now getting muddy thanks to the recent weather. A notice has been put up on the footpath from Crate Cottage (footpath 12) noting there is 'Beef Bull in Field'. The Footpath Officer confirms that a local farmer is intending to put cows and one bull in the three fields surrounding the footpath. The farmer suggests the bull should be of no danger to walkers as the bull is young and fairly docile but legally a notice needs to be placed and walkers should continue take care.

The Footpath Officer suggests that future agendas include tree matters in a separate heading. The Council agree with his suggestion. **ACTION: Clerk to place tree matters within in separate heading for future agendas.**

21.10.07 Highways Matters

- a. Dorset Council emailed the Clerk regarding proposed temporary closure of The Hollow in November for works however this was shortly postponed.

21.10.08 Planning Matters

a. To Receive Decisions of Dorset Council

- i. P/VOC/2021/01652 Barn at Abergavenny Farm, Ridgeway Lane, Child Okeford, DT11 8HB. Proposal: Convert barn into 1 No. dwelling (Variation of condition 2 from planning application number 2/2019/0834 to allow amendments to the design of the dwelling shown on substitute drawing 662-02)
PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATION: NO OBJECTION
DORSET COUNCIL DECISION: GRANTED
- ii. P/FUL/2021/00065 Gold Hill Organic Farm, Ridgeway Lane, Child Okeford, DT11 8HB. Proposal: Erection of timber cabin to provide agricultural worker's dwelling (to replace existing shepherd's huts used for this purpose)
PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATION: NO OBJECTION
DORSET COUNCIL DECISION: GRANTED

b. To Consider Planning Applications

- i. P/HOU/2021/02243 1 Melway Gardens, Child Okeford, Blandford Forum, DT11 8EP. Proposal: Erect front extension.
PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATION: NO OBJECTION

Due to a pecuniary interest in the next application, Councillor Kerridge leaves the meeting at 20.02.

- ii. P/FUL/2021/02001 Melway House, Melway Lane, Child Okeford, DT11 8EW. Proposal: Erection of stables (for private use) & construction of access track.
PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATION: NO OBJECTION

After the Council have made their observation, Councillor Kerridge re-enters the meeting at 20.05.

- iii. P/ADV/2021/02120 The Cross Stores, The Cross, Child Okeford, DT11 8ED

Proposal: Display 1 No. externally illuminated fascia sign and 16 No. non-illuminated window graphics.

The Parish Council conclude that they would appreciate the comments of the Conservation Officer in this case and would like to request that any illumination of signage is restricted to opening hours.

- c. To Consider Planning Appeals:
- i. *Application No: 2/2020/0749/OUT – Land East of Gold Hill Business Park, Lower Common Road, Child Okeford. Appeal Reference: APP/N1215/W/21/3279462*
A village resident, who requests to remain anonymous, is a planning consultant and has discussed with Cllr. Knaption that they would be willing to advise on the appeal at no charge to the Parish Council. Cllr. Kerridge intends to speak with the individual regarding the process to ensure that the Council get the best representation. Cllr. Kerridge reports that the Planning Committee know that they have limited knowledge surrounding the appeal for a sufficient response from the Council and suggests that HMPC Ltd (who advised on the Reserved Matters details for Allen Close/Haywards Lane application) could be of service for this application. An amount of £900 was estimated for their previous bill but the amount invoiced was for £450 excluding VAT so there is the possibility of the remaining funds being budgeted towards this appeal. Cllr. Kerridge suggests that the anonymous individual and HMPC Ltd could work together to form the best response to the investigator from the Parish Council and ensure the Parish Council are well prepared for the appeal hearing.
- d. To Receive Consultations – None

21.10.09 Planning Advice

The meeting is suspended at 20.16pm as a member of the public is leaving and has a brief question regarding tree matters. The meeting resumes at 20.18pm.

21.10.10 Finance, Accounting and Administration Matters

- a. To Approve the Schedule of Payments
The Council **RESOLVED** Approval of the Payments Schedule and total amount of £2823.18 for SEPTEMBER 2021.
Proposed: Cllr. R Smith Seconded: Cllr. T Cotton
- b. To Approve the Statements of Accounts to 30.09.2021
The Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the Statement of Accounts to 30.09.2021.
Proposed: Cllr. R Smith Seconded: Cllr. M Kerridge
- c. To Consider the Draft Budget and Precept for 2022/23.
The Parish Council discuss the budget and precept for the next financial year at length. The Council are currently due to overspend in two areas, village cleaning and Clerk wages. Councillors are asked to review the expenditure report circulated by Cllr. Smith who suggests an increase of precept by just under 4% to cover the predicted overspend amounts. The possibility of a higher precept is discussed to cover the potential grant to the Village Hall for roof repairs. It is discussed that it would need to be a significant increase of over 20% to cover the requested grant and this may cause concern for village residents.
ACTION: Councillors to review expenditure and Clerk to add to Agenda for the next meeting.
- d. To Consider a Grant Request from Child Okeford Village Hall

As discussed earlier in Public Participation (21.10.04) the Parish Council resolve to discuss an initial grant of between £500-£1000 at the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to add to the Agenda for the next meeting.

21.10.11 Correspondence and Information

- a. A Correspondence Report was circulated prior to the meeting and no further discussion was needed. Please see attached on page 39.

21.10.12 Matters of Interest

- a. The key to the noticeboard at The Cross Stores has been misplaced. The Clerk has enquired at the shop for a spare key but the member of staff responsible was on leave. In the meantime, notices will be placed in the noticeboard at Millbrook Close.
- b. As agreed in a previous meeting, Cllr. Giles is due to be added to the bank mandate for the Treasurer's Account for the Parish Council.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Giles to update the mandate as soon as possible.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 1st November 2021.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.55pm.

Signed Dated

Chairman of the Council

Please note these are draft minutes until signed by the Chairman of the Council at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Correspondence Report

Correspondence received to the Clerk between 01/09/2021 – 28/09/2021.

Date:	Received From:	Regarding:
06/09/2021	Dorset Planning	Notification of Application P/HOU/2021/02243
10/09/2021	Resident	Comments regarding P/RES/2021/01582
10/09/2021	Dorset Waste	Notification of Service Disruption
13/09/2021	Dorset Planning	Notification of Application P/ADV/2021/02120
15/09/2021	Dorset Planning	Notification of Application PFUL/2021/02001
19/09/2021	Village Hall Secretary	Formal Grant Request & Minute Queries
20/09/2021	Resident	Comments regarding footpath N35/10 and N35/56
22/09/2021	Resident	Minutes & Filing Query
22/09/2021	Speed watch	Meeting Information
22/09/2021	Dorset Development Management	Notification of Planning Appeal 2/2020/0749/OUT
24/09/2021	Dorset Highways	Traffic Regulation Order (The Hollow)
25/09/2021	Resident	Comments regarding 2/2020/0749/OUT appeal
28/09/2021	Dorset Highways	Traffic Regulation Order Postponed