

**Clerk to the Council:**

Mr J.F. Vanderwolfe FILCM, Chartered MCIPD  
Newenham  
5 Halletts Way  
Axminster  
EX13 5NB  
☐ 01297 34444  
[johnvw@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:johnvw@tiscali.co.uk)

**Minutes of the Virtual Council Meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, commencing at 7pm**

**Present:** Cllr's J Higgs (Chairman), A Hiscock, D Marsh, M Stead and P Basham

**In Attendance:-**The Clerk (Mr J Vanderwolfe) and Cllr S Christopher (Dorset Council)

Draft until Approved

<b>257</b>	<b>Apologies</b> No apologies had been received.
<b>258</b>	<b>Democratic Period</b> No items brought forward
<b>259</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no Declarations of Interest made
<b>260</b>	<b>Minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 were accepted as a true record, and were signed by the chairman.
<b>261</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> Cllr A Hiscock stated that he continues to investigate the speed problems within the parish. Cllr Christopher asked for details of specific areas within the parish where this is perceived to be a problem. Cllr M Stead stated that in the late 1990's there had been a big campaign regarding speed problems within the parish, which had even attracted television coverage. He had produced a film at the time, which he agreed to circulate to members.  Cllr A Hiscock stated that he continues to collect details of residents who have a poor Broadband speed. He requested that details of anyone who had not yet responded, and who wished to sign up for the scheme, be sent to him as soon as possible.

**Dorset Councillors Report**

I would stress that this is very much an interim report as events are fast moving as attempts are being made to hold up the spread of COVID – 19. You will doubtless have appreciated that move to tier three, subsequent news of a West Dorset outbreak with a surge of cases has heightened concern. I have this morning emailed the head of Public Health for Dorset Sam Crowe, and certain portfolio holders and will report further at the Parish Council meeting.

I would stress that some local residence aged over 80 have had their first vaccine, this has not been without issue given that this involves some of the most vulnerable members of the community at a most challenging time of the year.

As you would expect I do receive emails from those who let holiday accommodation who have been forced to close. I will be working with Dorset Councillor Tony Ferrari and council offer Jim McManus, to see what can be done further to assist the holiday letting businesses and hospitality businesses etc.

- I am aware over concerns re Planning Application WD/D//19/000451 for the Westford Park Farm Extension to Chard Junction Quarry and delays in the officer issuing his report.

- I am aware over concerns re Thorncombe Village Shop and continue to press Councillor Garry Suttle, portfolio holder for financial assistance for the shop.

- I have received indirectly concerns from village residents regarding the reopening of the Thorncombe play area.

There is increasing concern about damage being done by four wheeled drive vehicles in sensitive parts of the Marshwood Vale Ward, for instance on common ground, land of intrinsic habitat interest owned by the National Trust. This damage is typically undertaken by the off roaders under cover of darkness and is causing great distress to many. I am in contact with Council Officers and of course the police and would welcome any comments/information that you may have. I continue to be informed of residence concerns regarding speeding and communicate with the police and highways safety team.

Vaccinations – care staff

- Dorset Council has started the process of arranging COVID vaccinations for care home staff, creating Vaccine Champions.

- The roll out of vaccinations will continue in the New Year. The Council is working very closely with health partners on this.

- The NHS is contacting people who need the vaccination in order of priority, as agreed with Government.”

- I quote the official Dorset Council/NHS advice:

‘The public have an important part to play to help the NHS to deliver the vaccination programme.

The key overarching messages for patients are:

Please don’t contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you;

When we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments;

If you can’t make an appointment let us know as soon as possible and we can then offer the slot to someone else. You will be called again

and please continue to follow all the guidance to control the spread of the virus and save lives.

It’s really important we don’t lose sight of the things we all need to continue to do to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Self-isolation, regular handwashing, wearing a face covering and limiting social contact all remain critical to protecting ourselves, our loved ones and our communities.’

#### Support for families and individuals

- We know the impact of COVID has hit many individuals and families hard financially. We’ve been working in partnership with Citizens Advice to provide advice and support to those facing redundancy, debt, housing problems and more. Residents can ring the Dorset Citizens Advice Adviceline – details are on the Dorset Council Website.

- Dorset Council has been awarded up to £922,153 from the government’s Covid Winter Grant Scheme to support children and families across the county.

- Some of this money will be used to make sure families who need it, including those who receive free school meals, will receive food vouchers during the Christmas holidays and February half term. Families will receive details of this scheme direct from their school.

- We’re also working with Citizens Advice to target support to help families facing fuel poverty this winter - more details will be available shortly.

- We are promoting befriending and mental health support for anyone facing isolation or loneliness.

#### Assets & property restructure in progress

- As part of our delayed convergence work the Assets and Property service restructure was launched on 9 Dec. Dorset Council is hoping to minimise any compulsory redundancies, but of course restructures are always stressful for the people affected, and the Council is very aware that this comes at the end of a particularly difficult time. We are ensuring robust support is in place for all those affected.

#### Quick update on Planning transformation

- The Planning transformation to converge of six systems into one has progressed well this year, despite the small matter of a global pandemic.

- The first phase to transfer information from the former North Dorset District Council has been completed.

- Data from West Dorset will be transferred in January, followed by the remaining legacy council systems.

- Once the transfer of data is complete, work will start on transforming the user experience of our planning portal, the aim is to make this better, but in transition there can be complications so please bear with the team.

#### Senior officer recruitment – children’s and adults corporate and exec director roles

- Following a robust process, Theresa Leavy has been appointed permanently to the role of Executive Director for People – Children’s, I am delighted by this appointment and I am sure you will welcome this announcement.

- We’ve also appointed Andrew Billany as Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety – again he was working in an interim role, like what he saw of Dorset Council and applied for the permanent position and was appointed against stiff competition.

- Recruiting to these roles on a permanent basis is good news for us a council, as it gives more stability and consistent leadership.

#### Emergency arrangements

- Should any emergencies arise out of hours, we have the usual ‘on call’ arrangements in place for officers to respond.

- o Children

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, please call the council's Children's Advice and Duty Service on 01305 228866. Call 999 if you think someone may be at immediate risk of harm</li> <li>o Adults</li> <li>o If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult who may be at risk, call 01305 221016 during office hours or 01305 858250 out of hours. Call 999 if you think someone may be at immediate risk of harm.</li> <li>o Homelessness</li> <li>o Dorset Council operates a homelessness emergency out of hours service every day including Bank Holidays. Telephone 01305 22100</li> </ul> <p>He also provided the following update link  <a href="https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2021/01/05/update-on-schools-colleges-and-childcare-5-january/">https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2021/01/05/update-on-schools-colleges-and-childcare-5-january/</a></p>
<b>262</b>	<b>Account for Payment:</b> The following accounts were agreed for payment: HMRC VAT £90.62, Dorset Community Transport £2000.00, SW Allotment Association £10.00, HMRC PAYE £207.60 and Society of Clerks £105.00
<b>263</b>	<b>Financial Update</b> The finance update was approved. The financial assets of the council as of the 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2020 stood at £16,493.63.
<b>264</b>	<b>Budget and Precept</b> The clerk had prepared a draft budget for the year commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021. It was noted that due to an increase in the Band D Equivalents the precept could be increased by £138 without changing the D rate parish payment demand of £32.23 for the year. Members went through the figures that had been presented and resolved to accept them. <b>Resolved that the budget would be £22,569 with a Precept Demand from Dorset Council of £10,440.</b> The chairman thanked the clerk for his work on preparing the budget.
<b>265</b>	<b>Former Telephone Box</b> It was agreed that the cost of refurbishing and re-siting of the former telephone box would be taken from reserves. The clerk suggested that some funds be earmarked for this project. The clerk explained that because the box was being moved, and that it was to be used for a purpose other than a telephone box, a planning application would be required. It is understood that this would cost in the region of £117. Cllr M Stead suggested that the box be dismantled and stored, where it could be refurbished, and then, later, erected on the agreed new site. The clerk stated that because the box was not listed, or in a Conservation area planning permission would not be required to dismantle it. Cllr A Hiscock would be the project manager. All agreed that this would be the best plan of action.
<b>266</b>	<b>Playfield</b> Cllr D Marsh stated that he was concerned about the large number of negative correspondences relating to the continued closure of the playfield. The Playfield committee were applying for funding to upgrade the play equipment, and it was hoped to be able to re-open the facility at Easter. The chairman stated that the parish council continued to back the decisions of this committee.

<b>267</b>	<b>Planning Applications</b> None received
<b>268</b>	<b>Determinations</b> None received
<b>269</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>  Nil
<b>270</b>	<b>Items of Urgency</b>  Nil
<b>256</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>  The meeting closed at 8.10pm  The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 7pm, and will be a virtual meeting.

Signed ----- Chairman

Date -----