

Clerk to the Council:

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

Minutes of the Virtual Council Meeting held on the 2nd March 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), Cllr S Christopher (Dorset Council) and one member of the public.

Draft until Approved

296	Apologies All members present
297	Democratic Period The chairman informed the meeting that Pat Barnes had requested that he ask anyone interested in becoming a school governor to contact her, as they were rather short of members at present. Cllr A Hiscock informed the meeting that at present the parish magazine was being published online following a request to do so. This was because it was felt unwise to deliver it during the pandemic restrictions. This situation could be reviewed once the restrictions are lifted.
298	Declarations of Interest There were no Declarations of Interest under the Thorncombe Parish Council Code of Conduct made at this stage of the meeting
299	Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 nd of February 2021, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true record.
300	Matters Arising Cllr Marsh informed the meeting that due to time constraints in arranging to get the tree works in the playfield completed before the commencement of the nesting season, the additional quotation, as agreed in minute 282 had not been feasible, and the lower quotation had been accepted

301

Dorset Council Report by Cllr Christopher

I visited Thorncombe to look at safety issues outside of the school with the lead member for Education Councillor Byron Quayle

I continue to lobby for improvements to public transport in my discussions with the Leader of Dorset Council Councillor Spencer Flower and the Cabinet Member Councillor Ray Bryan

The latest information indicates that in Dorset Covid-19 cases per 100,000 continue to fall

The latest figure is 77.7 per 100,000 as of 26 February 2021 with 18 Covid related deaths in the previous 7 days This figure of 18 relates to people who have has a positive Covid test within 28 days of death.

Dorset Councillor Andrew Parry Cabinet member for Education is preparing for all pupils to return to schools on 8 March 2021 for face-to-face education. Previously this has seen essentially children of key workers being taught in school

Also from this date indoor visits to care homes will be possible for a single named visitor.

Over a quarter of a million local people have had at least one dose of the vaccine. I have not had a vaccine as I write this and await the vaccine with interest!

Public Health Dorset on behalf of Dorset Council have set up a Dorset Rapid Community Testing Programme for local business employers where the workers who cannot work from home 463 businesses and organisations have already registered

PPE is available for unpaid careers. The Dorset Council helpline is 01305221000 to request free Personal Protective Equipment

On a negative side fake text messages targeting Dorset residents are common claiming to be from Gov.uk about a Covid-19 grant and should be deleted immediately and the link not opened.

For advice on getting to future Vaccinations if you are unable to drive yourself or do not have a household member to take you Dorset Council has set up a Dorset Together helpline on
01305 221,000

Support grants have continued to be paid to Village Halls across the Marshwood Vale Ward and I have received a number of grateful e mails from Village Hall treasurers thanking me for my assistance. I have had a virtual meeting with the officer in charge of future community grants. I would be pleased to hear from community groups seeking financial assistance

The Dorset Council Local Plan is attracting considerable interest as of last Friday 26 February 2021 1,700 people have responded with over 10,000 comments

In terms of Web pages visits while in December the figure was 344, in January this increased to 11,620 and in the period 1 February 2021 to 26 February the figure was 17,731

There have been Coovid-19 secure displays in shop, TIC and library windows in 12 towns
There has also been the following

3 media releases sent to local newspapers and radio
84 articles have been published and 4,113 views of webinars

You will appreciate that I am writing this report a few days before the Chancellor reveals his budget in the House of Commons in challenging circumstances. The Dorset Council budget was approved at the February Full Council meeting of Dorset Council with some 70 of the 82 Councillors voting in favour albeit with Considerable reluctance. The reluctant support was a consequence of appreciating the difficulties of rising adult and child social care costs increased costs due to the need for changing working and compliance costs not wholly met by assistance from central government coupled with reduced income streams

I receive a number of e mails that I pass on to the relevant officers and portfolio holders where residents suffer from poor broadband and also mobile phone coverage
Clearly , with respect to broadband the pandemic has heightened the basic need for connectivity, whether for working from home or home schooling meeting with friends or indeed attending virtual council meetings !

I continue to lobby those mentioned above and our MP. I have also liaised with the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Broadband and MP for North Devon Selaine Saxby on this issue . In terms of mobile coverage this is so dependent primarily on the mobile phone Company, but I am speaking with the Dorset Councillor and deputy leader Councillor Peter Wharf who has been charged with addressing this issue n behalf of Dorset Council.

By way of a reminder, there is a Government commitment to create a fully connected country with 100 percent of the Country covered by gigabit broadband and extension of 4G coverage with the Shared Rural Network . The Shared Rural Network involves all mobile phone operators sharing equipment in order to improve coverage across rural areas.

In the meantime, given urgent need for home working and perhaps even more so with home schooling I can appreciate that even mooted broadband improvements by December 2021 can seem a long way off. I feel sure I will be writing about this again.....

You may well have read that there is much discussion about future possible changes in respect of Dorset Council offices. Naturally there is a realisation that there may for instance be greater home working even after 30 June 2021 and as a consequence surplus office space

I have liaised with the Dorset Council leader and our MP about planning delays and similarly emailed and spoken with officers and others about delays in local authority land charges .

The latter is naturally causing distress due to uncertainty whether the Chancellor will or will not extend the stamp duty holiday beyond 31 March 2021

Our Farmers are aware that while a tariff free agreement was signed by the UK and the EU in late December there are considerable non-tariff barriers to the detriment of those reliant on exported goods. I am conscious that there is change happening with the gradual with withdraw of the basic payment ie area based payment of subsidies. There is the movement towards a concept of public money for public goods under the Environment Land Management Schemes

Farmers have pointed out to me that they are increasingly concerned that while footpaths are seemingly walked more than perhaps ever there is alarm that they will increasingly see

	walkers depart from the Countryside Code guidance and walk off the course of the footpath so damaging crops
302	Accounts for Payment Resolved to ratify the following payments: J Vanderwolfe £54 and Thorncombe PCC £300.
303	Financial Update The finance update was approved. The financial assets of the council as of the 23 rd February 2021 were £15,478.11.
304	Dorset Local Plan Consultation Cllr Marsh felt that the draft plan relating to rural bus services was poor, and that some of the statistical information was not accurate. It is understood that Cllr Ray Bryant (DC) is very keen on local bus services. Cllr Hiscock stated that having looked at the draft plan most of the planned development for this part of Dorset was destined for Beaminster, Bridport, Dorchester and Lyme Regis. Agreed that councillors would individually make their comments via the Dorset website.
305	Former Telephone Box Project Update Cllr Hiscock reported that a number of volunteers had agreed to assist with this project. The work could not be undertaken at the present location because of the proximity of the highway, therefore the structure would be dismantled and moved to a place of safety, where renovation work could take place.
306	Playfield Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work has already started on the clean-up and preparation ● Further dates for clean-up will be MARCH 6-7/21, MARCH 13-14/21, MARCH 20-21/21 ● Richard Holt kindly helping and supplying the power for the pressure washer ● COVID-19 safety signage is ordered and should in place next week ● Trees to be pollarded on March 4/21, grass cutting will be done by TPFA and kind neighbours ● We hope to fully open on the Easter weekend April 3-4/21
307	Bus Services BUSES; All going in the right direction, slowly but surely! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No 14 - 65% loading, up from 45% in January/21 ● No 688 - 23% loading, up from 19% in January/21

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PlusBus - 12% loading, up from 10% in January/21 ● Grant application to be submitted for consideration for funds in July/21, hopefully ● Petition started by CPRE, which we signed, for improvements to Rural Bus Services, now up to over 30k signature
308	<p>Community Shop Cllr Christopher stated that whilst he continued to push for a reduction in the interest rates for the loan associated with the shop, he was receiving resistance from officers at Dorset Council on the matter</p>
309	<p>Allotments It was suggested that the other hedge on the site could do with a cut, however this would need to wait until after the nesting season.</p>
310	<p>BAVLAP and DAPTC Cllr Sewell (Upper Marshwood Vale), who is the chairman of BAVLAP stated that a meeting would be held on the 18th March to discuss the way forward for this organisation in more detail. Cllr Hiscock agreed to be the representative for the Dorset Association of parish and town councils.</p>
311	<p>School As mentioned in minute 297, the school needs more Governors</p>
312	<p>Community Car Service Running OK.</p>
313	<p>Rights of Way The chairman commented that local landowners are becoming frustrated with the number of walkers who are not keeping to the line of the public footpath or bridleway, despite the route being often well waymarked. Whilst the parish council is pleased that people are using public rights of way they should remember that the right is only to use the definitive route and does not give anyone the right to roam all over the land.</p>
314	<p>Planning Applications WD/D/20/003008. Goughs Barton, Stonelake: Replacement of roof covering on lean-to building. There had been some difficulties accessing the plans for this proposal, and therefore the clerk would request an extension of time.</p>
315	<p>Determinations Approval was noted on the following applications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Coggans Farm. Annex b) Valley View, Easthay Lane. Works to roof and outbuildings
316	<p>Correspondence Nil</p>
317	<p>Items of Urgency Nil</p>

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Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 7pm, and will be a virtual meeting.

Signed ----- Chairman

Date -----