

Clerk to the Council:

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Minutes of the Virtual Council Meeting held on the 2nd February 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

272	<p>Apologies No apologies had been received.</p>
273	<p>Democratic Period A parishioner had requested a no parking sign on the wall outside the church. It was pointed out that this was not property owned by the parish council. The only way to enforce parking restrictions is through highway road markings. There had been a number of incidents of fly tipping within the parish; which had been dealt with.</p>
274	<p>Declarations of Interest Cllr Higgs – Payment being made to him under item 277.</p>
274	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th January 2021 were accepted as a true record, and were signed by the chairman. It was noted that the final minute number should read 271.</p>
275	<p>Matters Arising Cllr D Marsh informed the meeting that unfortunately the application for Lottery funding for new play equipment had been rejected because of the large number of applications received. The committee had been advised to reapply in the future.</p>

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Dorset Council Report by Cllr Christopher

Since my last report the consultation on the new Dorset local plan has commenced. This is arguably one of the most important things the Dorset Council will do that it is have a plan which guides as to where development takes place. Central to this is deciding where homes will be built The Council has set out its thoughts guided by a predominate idea that homes will be allowed to be built predominately where they are reasonably close to major services not least of which are schools and hospitals. This is an important piece of work, especially given the demand for houses in the County and high house price/ earnings multiple. You may also believe that it is a good idea that houses for those working in our hospitals are care homes etc. should be available locally. Please remember that the local plan should be seen as a guide.

Thus it is an established fact in planning case law that the Local Authority does not have to slavishly follow the local plan and I am the first to remind officers of that when I hear concerns from those in the Ward

I continue to press for assistance for the village shops and the 11 village halls in the Ward. I have received e mails of thanks from a number of village halls in connection with Covid-19 lockdown grants. Please as a matter of priority let me know if any hall is missing out I say this as the Council will not because of GDPR send me details of all grants paid to all village halls for all lockdowns

With respect to the workforce of Dorset Council they are clearly impacted by the lockdown. One practical example is where a Dorset Council employee has children and there are child care issues schools and even playgroups having closed. In such circumstances childcare ids very much shared between spouses or partners. The result is an increase in what you might call flexi time and inspection of bridges footpaths etc. may happen at times which may change at short notice. All of this is totally fair enough and understandable provided the work is done. If there are concerns re highways issues I am naturally addressed straight away. There are rare occasions when major work is required .This may involve more complicated consideration of how the work is done and quotes obtained from specialist firms

The roll out of the vaccine continues and the reaction of those I speak with is very largely that this is very well organised Covid-19 support grants have again been paid out for the third lockdown and on an automatic basis according to Government rules. Such grants are what I call very much premises based i.e. where businesses are not able to open their premises while there are other business people who have been impacted through loss of work , work cancelled etc.

Work is continuing in relation to the declared climate emergency and also to improve broadband. I point out for example the difficulty parish councillors have due to poor broadband

I am conscious of how long people are spending in our local hospitals , not helped by the fact that the availability of carers is at such a premium

During the month I attended the meeting of the local WATAG meeting of those wish to promote improvements in transport and indeed public transport bus and rail primarily. I have known the chair of WATAG for a great many years and look to continue to be a channel of communication between the group and Dorset Council Officers and Transport portfolio holders and our employees

Finally the money!

	<p>You will have read the wide coverage that has been given to the financial difficulties that Local Authorities face and the impending impact on the level of Council tax I will be pleased to answer your questions at the meeting. This will reasonably include Local Government reorganisation being so quickly followed by the pandemic, issues around non council tax income being impacted and the need to take a realistic approach to building etc inherited from predecessor councils whilst having the central objectives to preserve services and look forward to a post Covid-19 world of economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Cllr Marsh commented that both him and his wife had received their Covid-19 injections, and had felt that the event had been very well organised. Cllr Marsh asked Cllr Christopher to look into the anomaly that Dorset bus pass holders are unable to use their passes until 09.30am, whereas Somerset and Hampshire pass holders can. This is important as travel to surgeries and other locations to obtain the Covid-19 injections is deemed to be essential travel.</p>
277	<p>Accounts for Payment Resolved to ratify the following payments: Precision £230.80 and J Higgs £20. There was a question regarding the payment for Precision, to which the clerk informed the meeting this was for cartridges for the printer. This was accepted.</p>
278	<p>Financial Update The finance update was approved. The financial assets of the council as of the 29th January 2021 were £15,774.68</p>
279	<p>Business Risk Assessment Annual Review Members, having examined the business risks of the council, felt that adequate measures were in place to safeguard the council, which includes the monthly financial update sheets.</p>
280	<p>Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation Cllr Christopher outlined the timetable for this consultation. Some councillors had visited the webinar available on the Dorset website and the publicity material had been widely distributed. Concerns expressed that there is very little reference to rural transport in this document. Councillors would look at the document further with a view of providing more detailed feedback at the March meeting.</p>
281	<p>Former Telephone Box Project Update Cllr Hiscock would investigate removal and storage of the former phone box, and report back to a future meeting.</p>
282	<p>Playfield Report Three quotations had been obtained for works to trees in the field. The quotations, excluding Vat were £290, £662.50, and £700. There was a query as to whether the lower quotation was for the five trees as this had not been specified. Cllr M Stead stated that he had used a contractor who had been very good. Agreed that he would be asked to provide a quotation. Concerns raised that works need to be done before the protected period, which is from March to September. Agreed that once the additional quotation was obtained Cllr Marsh would liaise with the clerk, who would have power to act.</p> <p>The park remains closed and the date of the AGM will be advertised as widely as possible when known.</p>
283	<p>Bus Services</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock down 3 has decreased total passenger journeys across the board, as below; No14; total passenger journeys Dec/20 - 54 from 64 possible = 84% loading No 14; total passenger journeys Jan/21- 35 from 64 possible = 55% loading No 688; total passenger journeys Dec/20 - 29 from 64 possible = 45% loading No 688; total passenger journeys Jan/21 - 12 from 64 possible = 19% loading PlusBus; total passenger journeys Dec/20 -10 from possible 32 = 31% loading PlusBus; total passenger journeys Jan/21 – 3 from possible 32 = 10% loading • Tesco Bags of Help Scheme is unfortunately suspended until further notice, due to Covid-19 • An application has been started for a grant from Chard Town Council.
284	<p>Community Shop The shop wishes to have a veranda fitted to the front of the shop and have requested the council to facilitate the planning application. The clerk stated that he could process the application for them.</p>
285	<p>Allotments Hedge had been cut.</p>
286	<p>BAVLAP and DAPTC The Beaminster & Villages Local Area Partnership had a meeting on the 11th January via Zoom. Unfortunately, the attendance was so low that the meeting was not considered to be quorate. This was a shame because Cllr Rebecca Knox from Dorset Council was present. Various reports were received regarding foodbanks and school transport. The next meeting is scheduled for the 8th February.</p>
287	<p>School The Secretary of State for Education. Rt Hon Gavin Williamson had agreed for the Thorncombe Primary School to be an academy trust. A letter from Andrea Rice, CEO of the Acorn Multi Academy Trust. Informed parents and carers that the academy consisted of six other primary schools in East Devon and West Dorset. Members were concerned about how items such as grass cutting, presently provided by Dorset Council, will be facilitated. Clerk to write to Cllr Christopher asking if there are covenants on the land owned by the school.</p>
288	<p>Community Car Service No issues raised</p>
289	<p>Police and Neighbourhood Watch No issues raised</p>
290	<p>Western Area Transport Action Group This group held their AGM on the 28th January via Zoom. The group has responded to consultations on the decline in rural buses and Dorset Climate Emergency. They will also be responding to the Dorset Local Plan. Together with Maiden Newton</p>

	<p>Parish Council they are supporting the zero carbon proposal for the Maiden Newton to West Bay narrow gauge railway project. The meeting was informed the Department for Transport are funding all public transport to the tune of £27.5m a week. Concerns were expressed at the lack of wheelchair access on the Yeovil/Bristol platform of Dorchester West. This is despite funding having been made available in readiness for the 2012 Olympics. Dorset Community Transport informed the meeting that they had maintained all their services during the pandemic. Yellow Buses of Weymouth are running at approximately 20% loadings, whilst Beaminster Parish Council stated they had suspended their Saturday service between Bridport, Beaminster and Crewkerne until Easter. The chairman commented that at present all public transport is effectively nationalised.</p> <p>Cllr Christopher stated that the required works at Dorchester West for wheelchair access had been ordered.</p>
291	Planning Applications None received
292	Determinations None received
293	Correspondence Nil
294	Items of Urgency Nil
295	Next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2 nd March 2021 at 7pm, and will be a virtual meeting.

Signed ----- Chairman

Date -----