



BERE REGIS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11th SEPTEMBER 2025 AT THE DRAX HALL, NORTH STREET, COMMENCING 7PM

Present: Cllrs L Fairhurst, J Hawkins, S Walker, G Curtis, J Percy, S Bardwell, K Hazell

Chair: Cllr Jon Park

Clerk: Mrs A Crocker

Also present: 7 members of the public and Dorset Cllr Laura Beddow

The Chair drew member's attention to the recent passing of Cllr Tony Bates. He had been a member of the Parish Council since the 26th May 2014 and his knowledge of the natural environment and locality has been invaluable. He was instrumental in setting up the Wildlife Group and the Nature Reserve on Souls Moor. Tony passed away on Monday 8th September and our thoughts are with his family at this sad time. A minute's silence was held in his memory.

1. Period of Public Participation

25.130 It was reported that, during the heavy rainfall recently, one of the houses in North Street was flooded again. In the past, Dorset Council had arranged for the nearby drains to be cleared. They had also agreed that a drain survey should be undertaken and, in doing so, found that there was more than one drainage system and some of the pipework is very old. Unfortunately, there are now no regular inspections carried out and no maintenance of the drains by the county. Just having them pumped out once a year would be an improvement. Cllr Beddow offered to look into this. She informed the meeting that drainage has become a reactive issue but she will arrange for an Officer to attend the site and draw up a plan of how best to proceed. A similar issue also exists on Rye Hill with water being funnelled into Green Close.

Dorset Local Plan – Residents felt that, if built on, the 2 opportunity sites would bring many more houses but nothing else has changed since the last consultation in 2021, in terms of improved infrastructure, drainage, connectivity, etc. The Chair encouraged residents to submit their comments to the consultation and this was echoed by Cllr Beddow.

Concern was raised about the proposed planning application for the rear of Egdon Close. The application states that the car park was not being used, which is not correct. Parking is a major issue in the Close. In addition, where are all the construction vehicles going to go whilst the work is being carried out. There are insufficient parking spaces in the road at the moment. It was further felt that the access would not be wide enough for a fire truck. The report does not cover many of the issues. Natural England are under the impression that the site is Common Land.

Local Plan – Concern was raised regarding the potential development of the 'bonfire' field site. A major water pipe going down through the middle of the field was installed some 10 years ago. In addition, the proximity to the chalk stream gives cause for concern. A direct link will be set up for residents to access the consultation document.

2. To receive apologies for absence

25.131 Apologies had been received from Dorset Cllr Mike Baker.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th August 2025

25.132 A copy of the minutes had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. Cllr Park proposed them to be a true and accurate representation of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Fairhurst and agreed unanimously. The minutes were signed by the Chair in the presence of the meeting.

4. Matters arising not covered in this meeting – for report only

25.133 A letter had been received from Pop In thanking the Parish Council for covering the cost of the recent First Aid Course.

5. To receive declarations of interest and review dispensations received

25.134 No interests were declared, and no dispensations had been received.

6. To receive the Dorset Councillors' Report

25.135 A copy of the latest report had been issued with the agenda. The contents were noted. 22nd September – There will be an additional public consultation of the Dorset Plan in Wool. Cllr Beddow will try to organise a consultation drop-in for Bere Regis but Officers may not be available as time is now quite short. Cllr Beddow will forward the Wool leaflet for information.

7. Key Topics

25.136 To receive an update on the Court Farm site for a new community hall

The Chair reported that he and the Clerk met with Brian Bleese of Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) at Court Farm. DWT have now appointed a land agent, Symonds & Sampson, to deal with the letting and contracting of the site. The Parish Council has been tentatively offered the site of the existing grain store. It is likely to be on a 125 year lease. No figures are available at the moment.

25.137 To consider the purchase and location of a village Christmas trees

As no suitable location can be found this year, there will not be a village tree.

25.138 To consider a response to the Parish Council survey

Members are invited to complete the survey by the 31st October.

25.139 To consider a response to the Dorset Local Plan consultation

Members are encouraged to respond as individuals. Andrea Pellegram, the consultants working with us on the Neighbourhood Plan review, have offered to respond on our behalf. A lighter touch response will cover the sites that have been proposed for the parish and how they interconnect with the Neighbourhood Plan. This will cost £900 + VAT but will provide a more detailed and relevantly constructed response than we could perhaps supply alone.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would provide a suggested list of considerations that parishioners might wish to comment on, and that this would be published on Facebook, on our noticeboards, and in the parish magazine.

8. Finance

25.140 To approve the monthly expenditure

The following payments had been requested:

RBL	2 x Silent Silhouettes	375.00
Pop In Place	Materials for Rye Hill notice board	126.96
Blandford FTC	Printing play ground layouts	1.36
A Lynam	Lunch club food	21.00

I Ventham	Lunch club food	178.14
BDO LLP	External audit	504.00
AG Tree Services	Tree work in Elder Road	540.00
Imperative Training	CU Medical – defib battery	294.00
Cloudy IT	September email, data storage, etc	104.28
A Crocker	September salary + expenses	983.66
HMRC	September PAYE	358.51
Lloyds	Account charges 10.07 to 09.08.25	12.19
Blandford FTC	Local Plan printing	6.11
Defib Warehouse	Battery pack for Zoll defib	174.00
DC Pension Fund	September pension contributions	331.32
Bailie Cross Garage	Communibus service and check	335.94
J Franklin	NeighbourCar trips – July & August	91.80
A King	Lengthaman – August 2025	2,644.23
A Heydon	NeighbourCar trips August	29.70
J Kurzejewska	NeighbourCar trips August	43.20

The total amount requested from the Precept is £7,155.40.

Cllr Fairhurst proposed the payments are made. This was seconded by Cllr Curtis and agreed unanimously.

25.141 To accept the reconciliation of accounts and position against budget

Both reports were issued with the agenda and were duly noted.

25.142 To confirm the completion of the 2024/25 audit

Noted.

25.143 To consider a grant of £500 to FoBRS

A grant application had been submitted for the purchase of a selection of non-fiction books to support the various topics studied across the different year groups and increase the school's library offering. Cllr Walker proposed the grant is awarded. This was seconded by Cllr Park and agreed unanimously.

9. Planning

25.144 To consider planning applications received

P/VOC/2025/04831 Derelict barn on north side of Blind Street – Demolish brick barn and erect new dwelling house (with variation of condition 2 of planning permission P/FUL/2022/01870 to revised the new approved plans)

Not as nice as the original plans. The Conservation Officer has raised some pertinent points and the PWP proposed that our response confirms agreement with those comments and they need to be addressed.

P/FUL/2025/04931 Land to the rear of 11-12 Egdon Close – Construction of a detached chalet bungalow.

Objection – traffic, parking. access. The comment relating to Common land needs to be investigated.

Cllr Park proposed the recommendations of the PWP are accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Bardwell and agreed unanimously.

25.145 To consider tree work applications

There were no tree applications at the time of the meeting.

10. Parish Amenities and Rights of Way

25.146 Play area update

Copies of the layouts and quotes for each proposal had been displayed at the start of the meeting. Sutcliffe is the main choice but the age range to be accommodated needs to be expanded. It was unanimously agreed that Sutcliffe are appointed the developer for the site. The representative from Sutcliffe will be invited to speak at the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Hazell will be attending the school to assess the type of equipment the children may want on the site.

The Clerk will confirm the appointment of Sutcliffe.

24.147 Allotment update

Frequent complaints are received about the lack of use of the allotments, with 18 people currently on the reservations list. The tenancy agreement will be updated and tenants will be required to cultivate their plots – grass will not be deemed as cultivation. Those tenant holders who do not abide by the agreement will be presented with a ‘yellow letter’ requesting that they tidy/cultivate their plot within 30 days. If nothing happens, a ‘red letter’ will be sent giving notice to quit the plot. The tenant will then have a set number of days to remove any equipment or plants they wish to keep. This will come into effect from 1st April 2026. Prior to this, all current holders will be sent a copy of the new agreement for their comments.

24.148 To consider the cost of a storage container to be located in the central car park

Delivery of the container will be possible. The trees around the site will have to be pruned within the compound. The cost of the container, plus delivery will be no more than £1,000.

25.149 To consider the planting of 4 horse chestnut trees on Souls Moor

One of the trees will be planted at the cemetery – the location to be agreed. The others will be planted on the lower part of Souls Moor but, at this point, it is not known how large they are and it might be necessary to grown them on before they can be safely planted. The Parish Council will cover the cost of tree guards, etc when the time comes.

25.150 Defects

- Fire escape at the Village Hall – Cllr Park informed the meeting that the platform at the top of the fire escape needs to be repaired and the fire door outside needs to be repainted. The fire escape stairs need sanding down and repainting. The total cost will be in the region of £1,800 and an application to cover some of the costs will be submitted in due course. It is felt that £900 will cover the cost of getting the urgent work undertaken.
- The access ramps to Jubilee Bridge are looking great but the middle needs to be replaced now. The edges of the lower rail need to be sanded as they are at the level for children and are likely to have splinters. The lip has also settled leaving a trip hazard. The Clerk will contact the Rangers to highlight the issue of the lower rail and the potential trip hazard.

ACTION: CLERK

11. Conservation and Environment

25.151 To review and agree the Risk Assessment for the Wildlife Group

This will be taken to the October meeting.

25.152 To agree the payment of up to £40 for a new first aid kit for the Wildlife Group

Cllr Park proposed the kit is purchased. This was seconded by Cllr Bardwell and agreed unanimously.

12. Police Traffic and Roads

25.153 It was noted that there are additional traffic survey strips in place around the Poole Hill roundabout. The Clerk will investigate whether or not the data collected is available for review.

13. Community Liaison

25.154 Cllr Curtis is now the Parish Council representative on the Thomas Williams Trust.

Two new drivers have come forward as volunteers for the communibus. Both have had a trial drive with Cllr Park and are happy to be called upon when necessary.

14. Children and Youth

25.155 Nothing to report.

15. To receive the Clerk's report and Councillors' reports on items not covered by the agenda

25.156 Clerk's Report

A copy had been issued with the agenda. The contents were noted.

25.157 Parish Councillors' Reports

The Clerk will email a list of actions undertaken to date regarding the Remembrance Day service to Cllr Percy. Should the Scouts call an organisational meeting, Cllr Percy will attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

16. Items for the Parish Magazine

25.158 The following items will be included in the Parish Magazine:

- Play park
- Allotments
- Local plan

17. Date of the next meeting

25.159 The next meeting will be on Thursday 9th October, commencing 7pm at the Drax Hall. Any items for inclusion on the agenda should be passed to the Clerk by the 1st October.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.15 hrs.