



Minutes of the Meeting of Corfe Mullen Town Council
held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 19:30 via Zoom

Present: **Councillors**
D Sowry-House (Mayor)
M Barron
A Craven
D Everett
P Harrison
A Holland
P Holland
B Honeyman
T Howard
S Jefferies
J Lortie
D Mattocks
P Purvis
J Stennett

In Attendance: Nicola Gray (Town Clerk)
Catherine Horsley (Deputy Town Clerk) (minute taker)

Public Participation

There were 21 members of the public present.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting noting one member of the public who wished to speak, along with some correspondence relating to item 20/141 which would be read out by the Clerk, along with a further item to be read out under agenda item 20/139.

It was RESOLVED to move agenda item 20/141 to follow item 20/134 and allow the public participation to take place before the item was formally discussed by members.

TC 20/131 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

No apologies for absence were received.

TC 20/132 To Record any declarations of interest Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

Declarations of interest were made by Cllr Harrison pertaining to agenda item 20/138 as a member of the Carnival Committee and Cllr Everett pertaining to agenda item 20/141 as a landowner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D.A.' with a flourish underneath.

TC 20/133 To Approve minutes of meeting held on 12 January 2021 LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41 **A**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 were APPROVED.

TC 20/134 To Note minutes of Committees **B**

- **Finance & Administration Committee held on 10 November 2020**
- **Planning Committee held on 24 November 2020**
- **Planning Committee held on 15 December 2020**

The minutes were NOTED.

TC 20/141 To Note the Dorset Local Plan and Consultation **H**

The Mayor welcomed Mr Matthew Cox, member of the public, to the meeting and invited him to speak as part of the public participation in the meeting. Mr Cox thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to speak with regards to the draft Dorset Local Plan consultation. The key points were noted as follows:

- Mr Cox reiterated he was not against development in Corfe Mullen and the need for housing, however, as there were currently over a million brown belt planning applications approved across the UK with around 11 thousand of those in the BCP Council area, the question should be asked as to why brown belt applications had not been prioritised before any green belt development was considered.
- Several new homes within phase one of the Windgreen development had not sold with phase two of development not yet underway. Several of the Bloor homes development in Wimborne had also not sold and Mr Cox believed those houses should be sold prior to any green belt development.
- The prices of the new homes which had been built so far were not affordable for many and therefore the question as to how they were deemed essential or affordable housing is prevalent.
- In November 2019, Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. The Town Council along with the community should be leading by example to show the best way to build was to not destroy the local habitat.
- There had not been enough consideration for adequate infrastructure in respect of schools, doctors, and dentists in Corfe Mullen along with the increasing traffic and volumes of vehicles.
- Evidence showed in the UK, the population had decreased by 1.3m since Brexit. If brown belt areas were used alongside the drop in population, there was potential for the green belt to be retained without being developed.
- Consideration of other options by developing areas closer to the A31 where access would be easier, a new town or using redundant office and workspace in other areas.

The Mayor thanked Mr Cox for his comments. The Clerk read out five emails from residents, Mr John Goddard, Rebecca West, Leslie Cripps, Alan Gamblin and Sarah Thacker with their comments and objections relating to the draft Dorset Local Plan, noting all emails had been replied to with advice to respond direct to the Dorset Council Consultation.

The Clerk presented the report for members to note and agree the way forward in producing a response as the Town Council. The information around the consultation also required awareness throughout the community and residents should be encouraged to respond to the consultation direct to Dorset Council.

Members discussed the sections pertaining to Corfe Mullen of the draft Plan and consultation, noting this was a large and complex document. The key points noted were divided into two parts as follows:

General Principles –

- It was a Government driven issue imposed on Dorset Council to build and identify sites in Dorset for potential development over the next 15 years to 2038.
- Members needed to look at the criteria and sites to see what could be defended, and at best manage what was required by the Parish, where the Parish wanted it. The position was that development areas would be identified regardless, and it was for the Town Council to think constructively and calmly on material planning grounds. Objections just because the plan was not liked generally was not appropriate or a valid response. Corfe Mullen was surrounded by heathland and green belt, which made the area vulnerable to potential future development.
- The way in which people worked had changed, particularly in the current pandemic climate, and further consideration as to the allocation of housing numbers was required.
- Under section 7.21 of the plan, there was no clarification or justification of the generalisation made around the employment decisions.
- There is a requirement to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in respect of brown field sites accommodating further housing before development of the green belt.
- There were significant anomalies in relation to the retail provision, pedestrian and cycling paths for easy access, vehicular access, flooding and ecological issues.
- The plan went against the current guidance in Section 136 of the NPPF, whereby there was a clear requirement to demonstrate exceptional circumstances for green belt development.
- New developments which were levied with CIL payments to the Town Council for local infrastructure improvements were a fraction of the money required.
- The suggested infrastructure changes within the plan went against the climate and ecological emergency already declared by Dorset Council by encouraging travel in an area lacking public transport to neighbouring towns.

Specific points relating to Corfe Mullen –

- **Flooding** – There were flooding concerns in some of the identified areas for development and the need to ensure there was a sustainable drainage system in place would be a major part of building and highways works.
- **Bio-diversity** – There was a need to protect the biodiversity of Waterloo Valley which was a wildlife environment and had precious species. It would be impossible for any development to keep the character and protect the wildlife, as the road would need to be widened to provide safer access to developments, which would result in loss of hedgerows, trees and shrubs. This would in turn increase flooding of the area as the land would be turned over to tarmac and concrete and the wildlife diversity would disappear.
- **Vehicle access** - Pardy's Hill was a very steep road leading to a limited sight junction with Blandford Road. Neither this nor Waterloo Road were designed for the proposed volume of traffic and the road layout and junctions would require significant redesign or an alternative access road which would result in the loss of further green belt.
- **Retail** – The suggestion of a Pharmacy being built on the retail development at Windgreen is not realistic due to the changing shopping habits because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, retail units being built does not necessarily mean that private retailers would be prepared to fill them.



- **Type of housing and needs** - There was lack of any detail on the type and affordability of housing proposed in correlation with the housing needs. Housing needed to be affordable for the community with a Community Land Trust established.
- **Infrastructure** - Infrastructure analysis had not been carried out on roads, drains, doctors, hospitals, and schools and whether those already in situ were able to cope with an increased population in south east Dorset. Traffic congestion was already an issue within the Parish, with no national strategy to improve public transport.

Members agreed that residents should be encouraged to get involved with the consultation and raise concerns directly with Dorset Council, noting there was a misunderstanding by the public that neither the Town Council nor Dorset Council were selling or buying land for development. It should be highlighted to residents that the Dorset Local Plan merely earmarked land owned by private landowners which, if sold to developers, would be generally granted planning permission.

Members agreed the Town Council's response should be positive, very specific and clear on where it would not want development and why. Providing factual evidence on why the proposals for Corfe Mullen were inappropriate and went against the NPPF. The response to Dorset Council for consideration to be given to identifying areas where a new town could be developed, similar to Poundbury, with infrastructure in place from day one, which would take development away from existing towns and parishes and the subsequent loss of green belt in those areas.

The Clerk noted this was the first consultation and there would be a second consultation later in year which would incorporate objections, comments, and changes following the first consultation, however, the first consultation response was considered the most important.

Cllr Craven proposed and recommended Cllr Howard to assist the Clerk to draft a succinct response which was evidenced and referenced to the draft plan and NPPF directive/guidance. The Mayor suggested a working party to formulate a response. However, the Clerk advised it would prolong discussions and requested that each member provide a succinct response which could then be collaborated for a full response. The Clerk would then work with Cllr Howard to link to sections within the draft plan to formulate a draft response to be presented to the next Full Council meeting on 23 February 2021 for approval. The Clerk requested that Cllr A Holland as chair of Planning Committee was also involved in drafting the response.

Members discussed the safest and most appropriate way to communicate with members of the public in order to provide a balanced view to Dorset Council consultation from the whole community. The Town Council's response would be publicised on the website to encourage residents to give evidence-based objections. The Clerk noted a newsletter paper publication was not encouraged due to the Covid-19 pandemic and how focus on electronic communications had been raised at the Dorset Leaders and Clerks monthly meeting with the Chief Executive of Dorset Council, and that publications produced by Dorset Council were available in libraries and Post Offices as well as online. The Clerk also noted the Plan was owned by Dorset Council and care should be taken if information is reproduced to ensure it is accurate.

Cllr Harrison advised there was pressure on Dorset Council from the local MP and Dorset Councillors to extend the consultation period. Cllr Harrison noted he had utilised his Dorset Council editorial in the February edition of the Corfe Mullen Link to raise awareness of the Dorset Local Plan consultation. The Mayor agreed to include

some commentary in the March edition of the Link. It was noted some residents were already sending out communications.

It was RESOLVED for the Clerk to draft a response with the assistance of Cllr Howard and Cllr A Holland on behalf of the Town Council for presentation at the next Full Council meeting on 23 February 2021 for approval.

TC 20/135 To Approve Accounts for Payment

C

Cllr Craven asked what the 'Pay as Go' mobile costs related to. The Clerk advised it was the Head Groundsman's mobile phone, noting the contract was being reviewed to look at a more cost-effective monthly mobile phone contract.

It was RESOLVED to approve Accounts for Payment.

TC 20/136 To Approve Bank Reconciliations

D

It was RESOLVED to approve Bank Reconciliations for December 2020.

TC 20/137 To Approve Draft Budget

E

The Clerk presented the report noting the total draft expenditure was £444,843 not £433,643 as stated in the report.

Cllr P Holland noted the monies held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund and asked why this was not included in the budget. The Clerk confirmed the figure on the bank reconciliations included CIL and Section 106 monies which could not be included in the budget as they were considered earmarked reserves, along with some running costs due to the Council only being able to legally hold a maximum of £85k in the current account at any one time.

Cllr Craven queried the following in terms of the budget lines:

- Were the professional fees tax deductible? The Clerk confirmed the nominal code related to professional fees such as solicitor costs, not membership fees.
- Should the grant funding remain at the same level?
- Should the allotments budget revert back to historic levels? The Clerk confirmed the allocation would be for maintenance and to cover outstanding issues which were increasing as a result of the flooding issues and items becoming more apparent as the site became established.
- How much did dog bins cost, as the allocation appeared high. The Clerk confirmed the bins for Town Council sites costed circa £300 each.

Cllr Craven concluded that when considering any spend, consideration should be given to the cost, whether there was sufficient budget and the ongoing implications and reiterated the Town Council had a responsibility with public money.

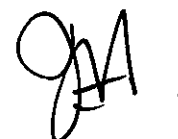
The Mayor proposed to accept the draft budget, which was seconded by Cllr Harrison and unanimously agreed.

It was RESOLVED to approve the draft budget for 2021/22.

TC 20/138 To Approve remaining Grant Applications

F

The Clerk presented the report noting the additional information received for the grants which had been put on hold at the meeting on 12 January 2021.



- Citizens Advice East Dorset – Request for £2,000, recommend £1,500 – confirmation received that the office in Wimborne would be remaining open, with the manager of Purbeck managing both Purbeck and East Dorset offices.
- Legs and Company Leg Club – Request for £1,500, recommend £1,000 – accounts were not available as the club had only been running for 4 months prior to the Covid-19 pandemic forced closure and there was no access to the assets required for recording a set of accounts.
- Corfe Mullen 5k run and Children's one-mile fun run – Request for £255, recommend £150 – the return of the funds from the previous year had been overlooked and had now been returned.

Cllr Craven proposed to approve the recommendations for the grants previously put on hold. Members voted unanimously to award recommended grants to Citizen Advice East Dorset and Legs and Company Leg Club. Members voted to award recommended grant to the Corfe Mullen 5k run and Children's one-mile fun run. Of the 14 members present, 13 voted in favour with one abstention, being Cllr Harrison who had declared an interest at the start of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to approve a s.142 grant for £2,000 to Citizens Advice East Dorset, a s.137 grant of £1,000 to Legs and Company Leg Club and a s.137 grant of £150 to Corfe Mullen 5k run and Children's one-mile fun run.

TC 20/139 To consider the Update on Flooding Issues at the Allotment Site

G

The Clerk read out an email from Mary Dix, resident and allotment holder regarding her observations to the flooding issues on the allotment site.

The Mayor noted some observations from a recent site visit carried out by Cllr Purvis, Cllr Jefferies and himself, whereby the allotments holders who had worked the ground to remove weeds and large stones from their plots had reduced the ground level and therefore those plots were experiencing water retention and surface water. It was noted some plot holders who had cultivated their plot and increased the ground level with topsoil, and had dug drainage trenches, had alleviated some of the flooding issues on their plots.

The Mayor noted allotment holders should be encouraged to self-help and take some responsibility to ensure good drainage on their plots.

Members discussed the makeup of the soil, which was predominately clay, the feasibility of the paths returning to grass rather than woodchip and the possibility of planting trees to soak up some of the excess water. It was noted the scrub area was a protected wetland, therefore, trees could not be planted in this area.

Members also discussed the track at the top running adjacent to the site, where a ditch had been filled in and this may have aggravated the flooding issue on the site. It was questioned whether the ditch could be replicated and dug on the allotment land to run down the right-hand side to the scrub area and stream at the bottom of the site.

At 21:23, the Mayor proposed that Standing Order X3 in relation to time limits for meetings be suspended to enable the meeting to proceed beyond two hours and the important business be completed. Cllr Craven seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed and RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order X3.

Cllr Craven proposed to pause any further spending and to investigate the possibility of a ditch being dug over a period when the Grounds team were available, which

would be cost neutral and demonstrate to the allotment holders that the Town Council were taking some action to try and alleviate the flooding issues. Cllr Jefferies agreed and noted the Town Council should seek advice and work alongside the Allotment Association.

The Clerk reminded members, at the meeting held on 15 December 2020, it had been resolved to pause discussions until the publication of the Dorset Local Plan, as this had been done it was agreed the Town Council should seek further advice from experts on the matter. It was noted a response should be sent to Mary Dix thanking her for her positive and proactive comments, which were constructive.

Further investigations would be sought on the possibility of a ditch being dug along the top and right-hand side of the allotment site to the scrub area to drain away some of the excess water.

TC 20/140 To Consider Tree Planting in the Parish

Verbal

Cllr Jefferies noted previously members had discussed tree planting within the Parish which had been paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was a budget in 2020/21 for tree planting which Cllr Jefferies was keen to utilise, and now would be a good time of year to plant trees.

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Jefferies had reached out to members for suggestions on locations, and members agreed the allotment site was considered a good location. However, following the previous discussion, this was no longer feasible due to the scrub area being a protected wetland.

The Deputy Clerk noted she had met with the Community Conservation Officer from Dorset Wildlife Trust who had suggested tree planting at the Recreation Ground along the perimeter of the County field. Cllr Harrison noted how relevant permissions would be required, as the Town Council did not own the County field, prior to any tree planting and to ensure the right trees were positioned in the right areas.

The Mayor noted previously it had been agreed and budgeted for, to provide four trees for local schools and the Royal British Legion to commemorate VE day, which had yet to be progressed.

Cllr Craven proposed to supply four trees and defer additional tree planting following investigation of potential locations, working alongside Dorset Wildlife Trust. Cllr Lortie seconded the proposal. All members voted in favour. However, Cllr Honeyman noted he would not support tree planting in the County field.

It was RESOLVED to supply four trees for local schools and the Royal British Legion to commemorate VE Day and defer additional tree planting following investigation of potential locations, working alongside Dorset Wildlife Trust.

TC 20/142 To Consider a Neighbourhood Plan for Corfe Mullen

The Clerk presented the report for members to decide whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan for Corfe Mullen and agree three Councillors to be part of the focus group to involve residents.

The Clerk advised that she had recently attended a Neighbourhood Plan workshop, which had been very good and had provided clear guidance on how to proceed and obtain grant funding which was available. It was noted the plan would take up to three years to complete with the grant funding available to cover the cost of an external

consultant to oversee the plan to ensure policies were watertight, with the Clerk managing the work and funding application.

Cllr Harrison proposed to progress drafting the Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with a Neighbourhood Development Order. Cllr Craven asked what policies were included in the plan, and would it be possible to specify the types of housing. The Clerk confirmed the plan would incorporate planning matters only and not strategic matters. Cllr Howard seconded the proposal. All members voted in favour to progress drafting the Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with a Neighbourhood Development Order.

It was RESOLVED to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

TC 20/143 To Note Clerk's Update

Verbal

The Clerk provided a verbal update, with the key points noted as follows:

- The living Christmas tree had been planted in the green space by the Windgreen roundabout by the Grounds Team. The Town Council would continue to support the Carnival Committee with a cut tree until the planted tree was established and of a suitable size to decorate.
- Repairs to the perimeter fencing at the Henbury Play Area were being carried out to ensure the fencing was safe. However, future consideration would be needed to replace the fencing.
- The Clerk was meeting with Dorset Highways the following week to review verge and pavement parking in Towers Way.
- The Clerk and her Deputy had met with an architect with a view to drawing up plans for the Village Hall improvements work. It was anticipated draft plans would be presented to a meeting of the Town Council as sole Trustees of the Village Hall in late February or early March 2021.
- The alarm at the Town Council office had been reactivated. Should members be made aware of the alarm being activated, they should contact the Clerk who would attend to reset and deal with any issues.
- Work was in progress to install broadband at the Grounds Staff Building at the Recreation Ground for the purposes of the proposed CCTV and alarm, which would be more cost effective than current arrangements.
- The repair bills for the Ford Ranger truck were increasing due to the age of the truck, therefore, future consideration should be given to scrapping the vehicle as and when it became no longer cost effective.
- Dorset Highways had advised that the overhanging trees and shrubbery on Broadmoor Road adjacent to the allotment site were the Town Council's responsibility and should have a 17ft clearance. Work was underway to obtain a quote from a tree surgeon as the Town Council did not have the equipment to carry out the work.

Cllr Harrison asked for an update on the overhanging trees at the cemetery. The Clerk advised she thought it had been completed but would check and advise accordingly.

The report was NOTED.

TC 20/144 To Note Mayor's Report

Verbal

The Mayor noted the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme for residents, which was positive and good news.

The report was NOTED.

TC 20/145 To Note Dorset Councillors' Report

Verbal

Cllr Harrison noted the Dorset Local Plan consultation which had already been discussed, and as the Dorset Council representative for the Beacon Hill Liaison Committee had received an email to advise the habitat regulations assessment application had been pushed back by the Strategic Planning Committee from 1 February 2021 to 29 March 2021. Cllr Jefferies advised the application was ready with exception of Natural England. It was noted when this was resolved, the application would be backdated to when the previous permission lapsed.

Cllr Barron had nothing further to add.

The report was NOTED.

TC 20/146 Matters for Forthcoming Agendas No decisions can be taken¹

Verbal

Cllr P Holland asked if any response had been received from Dorset Council relating to the road conditions survey. The Clerk advised she had not received a response to date. Cllr P Holland noted how Dorset Council were doing a good job carrying out mechanical road sweeping in the Parish and would encourage them to do more.

TC 20/147 To Resolve to exclude members of the press and public

It was RESOLVED to exclude members of the press and public in order that agenda item TC 20/148 and 20/149 be dealt with after the public (including the press) had been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

TC 20/148 To Consider Quotes for CCTV and Approve Successful Quote

J

The Clerk presented the report to consider the three quotes to install CCTV at the Town Council Office and Grounds Staff Building at the Recreation Ground and to approve a successful quote.

Cllr Harrison noted the first quote was comprehensive and value for money and asked if installation of CCTV would reduce the Council's insurance premiums. The Clerk confirmed she would check with the insurers, however, she felt it should have some impact.

The Clerk advised the three quotes did not currently include a camera at the rear of the Village Hall overlooking the car park which should be considered if agenda item 20/149 is approved. However, the Clerk would investigate the costs of this as an additional camera and email members outside of the meeting to approve the additional cost in the quote.

Cllr P Holland and Cllr Craven agreed the first quote was value for money with installation of CCTV acting as a deterrent at minimal cost.

Cllr Harrison proposed to approve Unique Fire and Security to install and maintain the CCTV system at both the Office/Village Hall and Grounds Staff Building, which was seconded by Cllr P Holland. All members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal

¹ Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business which are not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119)

and to obtain costs and agree by email for the additional camera at the rear of the Village Hall overlooking the car park.

It was RESOLVED to approve Unique Fire and Security to install and maintain the CCTV system at both the Office/Village Hall and Grounds Staff Building and to obtain costs to be agreed by email for additional camera at the rear of the Village Hall overlooking the car park.

TC 20/149 To Consider and Approve Recommendations from Staffing Sub- Committee K

The Clerk presented the report to consider and approve recommendations from the Staffing Sub-Committee held on 12 January 2021.

The Clerk advised following the Staffing Sub-Committee, contact was made with Ellis Whittam, HR Advisers regarding ceasing the current arrangements for use of Council vehicles for personal use and commuting to and from workplace with immediate effect, as it was felt the Council should be fair and reasonable to those staff involved in order for them to find an alternative method of transport to get to and from the workplace. The Clerk proposed to allow one calendar months' notice period from the date they were informed. The Clerk confirmed she was meeting the staff involved on 27 January 2021 and would reiterate the vehicles insurance cover was for commuting purposes only during the one calendar month notice period. Any other use other than commuting outside of working hours, including having non council employees in the vehicles would amount to Gross Misconduct and disciplinary action being taken.

The Clerk provided an overview of other staff related matters discussed at the committee, including Council vehicles being kept in the Village Hall car park outside of working hours and all Town Council staff contracted working hours, including start and finish times to be reiterated to all staff members.

The Mayor proposed to agree one calendar months' notice period to cease use of the Councils vehicles for personal use and commuting to and from the workplace, which was seconded by Cllr Harrison. All members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

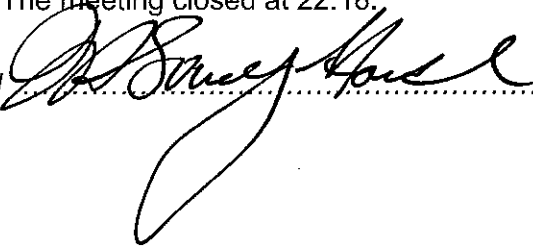
It was RESOLVED to agree one calendar months' notice period to cease use of the Councils vehicles for personal use and commuting to and from the workplace.

TC 20/150 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting

The date of the next meeting would take place Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 19:45 via ZOOM.

TC 20/151 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 22:18.

Signed  Date 4-3-2021