**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEETING OF SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT**

**7:00 PM ON THURSDAY 12th JUNE 2025 AT THE PORTMAN HALL SHILLINGSTONE**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R McNamara (Chairman), I Suter (Chairman) (IS) M Barlow (MB) R Harwood (RH), R Leadbeater (RL) M Pomeroy (MP) K Ridout (KR) Footpath Officer Grham Rains, Unitary Councillor S Murcer, the Clerk D Green.

In addition, there were six members of the public present.

**1020. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr White.

**1021. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None.

**1022. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st May 2025 were approved.

**1023. MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman noted:

**CCTV Augustan Avenue – Electricity Supply**

The Parish Council had been required to obtain permission from Dorset Council, who own the street light, before installation of the cameras at Augustan Avenue. This permission was granted and SSEN, the network operator were duly informed of this permission; they confirmed that the supply for the CCTV system must be registered via its MPAN number with an electricity company as an *unmetered supply.*

The Clerk had been unable any electricity supplier prepared to offer an unmetered contract at the time, due to the energy sector in the UK being in a state of hiatus because of the impending arrival of ‘Half Hour’ Settlement contracts which have been in place from April 2025. SSE, with whom the PC has an existing account for the Cricket Pavilion, were prepared to offer supply on the basis of their variable daily rate - £ 6.34 per day standing charge at the time. In view of the necessity to confirm a supply agreement these terms were accepted on behalf of the PC. Although a formal contact was not signed.

No billing for these charges was received until the beginning of May this year – the sum £1,126 was then debited from the PC’s bank account, representing billing from October 2024 to the end of March 2025. The PC subsequently received an invoice in May for April 2025 alone totalling £ 573. – the daily rate having tripled from 1st April, without warning, to £ 18.35 per day. This invoice has not been paid.

A complaint has now been made to SSE concerning the charges levied, and the fact that these actually unrelated to the running cost of the equipment. An energy consultant has advised that the actual running cost of one camera is around £80 per year, although that doesn’t include any standing charge. THE PC understands that Blandford Town Council are paying very small standing & unit charges for their CCTV power. The complaint has been copied to Simon Hoare M.P & Cllr Murcer; SSE have now appointed a Complaints Handler. A complaint to Ofgen may be raised concerning this issue.

The Chair & Clerk have agreed to terminate the Direct Debit for electricity, in order safeguard PC resources, whilst the matter is under review.

**CCTV Augustan Avenue – signage destruction**

The only remaining Partnership Security noticeboard at Augustan Avenue was destroyed by vandals on the evening of 18th May 2025. A video of this incident was sent to Dorset Police; those suspected of involvement have now been interviewed by the Police. It was agreed that the signage should replace by the same type of sign.

**Augustan Avenue –** a suggestion had been previously made for goal posts in the area adjacent to the Play Area, to encourage use of this area rather than the road for football. It was noted that the irregular mowing of this area may be an issue. Cllr Suter will speak to residents.

**1024. PUBLIC SESSION**

Lesley Gasson raised a number of issues:

* A request for road sweeping has been raised again with Dorset Highways
* A request has also been made for resurfacing Holloway Lane beyond the bridge, which is in extremely poor condition. This section of road, which is bordered on both sides by County Farms land but appears to be unadopted, is heavily used by contractors and is also now subject to increased future use by the Lavender Farm and the bee-keepers. Cllr Murcer agreed to take up this issue with Dorset Council.
* There is a redundant BBQ at the Portman Hall requiring removal
* Flower Festival & Open Gardens – arrangements are well in hand for the event on 21st & 22nd June – the Parish Council has agreed to award a prize and the judging of this has now been arranged. There will be 23 open gardens in all, mainly in Church Road and Blandford Road, though not all will be continuously open. Parking will be made available; visitors will receive an admission bracelet with opening details and there will be tea & cakes in a marquee. The Flower Festival with has displays from Sturminster Newton, Child Okeford and Hilton
* The National Lottery have granted £ 45,000 towards the new Bee-keeping centre, the residents of Shillingstone having raised a remarkable £260,000. Work on the new centre will be complete by September and there will be an opening ceremony at some stage, although no bees will be introduced until 2026

A resident who lives near the Recreation Ground raised the issue of footballs being kicked against his garden wall; balls were landing in his garden and being retrieved without permission. A request was made for the goal posts to be removed in the summer. The Football Club will be contacted concerning this situation.

**1025. UNITARY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Murcer noted:

* There is a meeting planned for 14th July 2025 concerning the new Dorset Local Plan; it should though be noted that this will not discuss site allocations. Cllr Murcer will seek a meeting with ward councils and planning consultant Jo Witherden when these are known.
* The issue of whether Neighbourhood Plans have supremacy over any Local Plan needs to be established. There are currently some 34 made Neighbourhood Plans in Dorset with a further 21 being made. It should noted thought that it highly likely that increased housing numbers will be focused on towns & larger villages, for example Marnhull
* There is an ongoing investigation concerning the standard of audits in Dorset Council, with concerns regarding increased payments in relation to housing repairs. It should be noted that the Section 151 finance officer has left Dorset council to become the CEO of Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch Council.
* The issue of mothballed housing developments, where building work has not commenced, despite a grant of planning permission is under review. Efforts are underway to establish if planning permission can be removed if work has not been completed by a specific date
* The issue of the Community Infrastructure Levy, which has not been applied in the North Dorset area, will be looked at.

**1026. FOOTPATH OFFICER REPORT**

Graham Rains raised the issue reported issue of a lock on the gate of FP 58. This has now been looked by the Rangers and they have been advised that this in fact a carabiner put on by a householder to stop horses escaping from a paddock when the gate is left open by walkers. This will be discussed with the landowner concerned. Cllr Murcer advised that suitable gate signage may be available from the NFU office in Sturminster Newton

Footpaths are generally overgrown at the moment, and any issues should be reported to the Rangers as necessary.

**1027. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

**Highways –** report noted

* A meeting was held with Dorst Councils Highways Team on 23rd May.
* The re-cutting of ditches at Vale Terrace has been arranged.
* MP has dug a channel through a root system to improve water flow
* Wessex Water are not accepting responsibility for the flooding issues; DC will be closing the road at Hine Town Lane at some stage to deal with a number of issues and temporary ‘Flood liable to Flooding’ signs will be deployed
* Ditches on the Trailway will be re-cut at some stage
* The refreshing of 8 road SLOW markings on Poplar Hill is scheduled at some stage
* The refreshing of the other road markings in Shillingstone Lane has now been completed following the surface dressing of this area (MP)
* A proposal to write to the owners of land adjacent to Hine Town Lane, requesting that ditch maintenance is carried out, was unanimously approved

**Youth Club** – a replacement team leader is being sought at present (IS)

**1028. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFRESHMENT UPDATE**

The Chair thanked Cllrs Suter & Pomeroy for all their work bringing the published report into completion. The consultation period has been changed to 1st June to 14th July 2025. Copied of the published report can be found in the Portman Hall, at the Church Centre and in the Old Ox. Anyone wishing to borrow a copy should contact Cllr Suter.

**1029. SUMMER EVENT ARRANGEMNET**The event will be held on 16th August and will include a BBQ and Open Mic event with Dan Baker. The event will be sponsored by the Parish Council. There will be some promotion of the event in the next few weeks.

**1030. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**P/VOC/2025/02909 - Land South West Of 1 White Pit Farm Cottages White Pit Shillingstone DT11 0SZ -** Erect 2 No. dwellings. Form new vehicular access and 4. Parking spaces. It was noted that prior application P/FUL/2020/00020 had been supported by the PC. There were no objections to this application.

**1031. FINANCES**

1. a) The Accounting Statements and the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair. The Internal Audit report was noted.
2. There were no Conflicts of Interest with external auditors BDO and a statement to this effect was signed.

**ii) Retrospective Payments approval:** the following payments were **APPROVED**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Payee Name** | **£ Total** | **Desc** |
| 02/05/2025 | Water2business | **£ 105.85** | Pavilion water |
| 02/05/2025 | Shillingstone Cricket Club | **£ 466.66** | Mowing |
| 06/05/2025 | David Green | **£ 37.50** | Expenses |
| 06/05/2025 | Groundwork UK | **£ 452.00** | Repay unspent grant |
| 06/05/2025 | Richard Leadbeater | **£ 35.99** | Pavilion indoor camera |
| 06/05/2025 | PCC Shillingstone | **£ 600.00** | Parish Magazine Grant |
| 06/05/2025 | PCC Shillingstone | **£ 250.00** | Churchyard Grant |
| 06/05/2025 | PCC Shillingstone | **£ 250.00** | Youth Club Grant |
| 06/05/2025 | The Blackmore Vale Charity | **£ 250.00** | Vale Pantry Grant |
| 06/05/2025 | Shillingstone Cricket Club | **£ 50.00** | Arrears |
| 12/05/2025 | Partnership Security Limited | **£ 144.00** | Desktop Hikvision |
| 14/05/2025 | SSE | **£ 1,126.64** | CCTV Augustan Electricity |
| 16/05/2025 | Carole Pudwell | **£ 40.00** | VE Day 80 - Prize |
| 16/05/2025 | Dorset Association of Parish | **£ 574.00** | Subscription |
| 16/05/2025 | Total Energy Services | **£ 108.00** | Call out fee |
| 16/05/2025 | Help for Heroes | **£ 40.00** | VE Day 80 - Prize |
| 19/05/2025 | Lloyds Bank | **£ 5.25** | Service Charge |
| 19/05/2025 | Edens Landscapes | **£ 270.00** | Mowing/Strimming |
| 21/05/2025 | SSE | **£ 119.37** | Pavilion Electricity |
| 28/05/2025 | D Green | **£ 828.07** | May 2025 pay |
| 02/06/2025 | Liz Brecknock | **£ 161.45** | Pavilion cleaning |
| 02/06/2025 | Harts of Stur | **£ 11.00** | New broom |
| 02/06/2025 | J P Consultants | **£ 150.00** | Internal Audit fee |
| 02/06/2025 | Shillingstone Cricket Club | **£ 466.66** | Mowing |
| 05/06/2025 | Ian Suter | **£ 164.24** | NP Printing |
| 05/06/2025 | SSE | **£ 116.89** | Pavilion Electricity |

1. **Clerks Expenses –** expenses of £ 41.25 were approved

**1032. PLAY AREAS, RECREATION GROUND AND PROPERTY CHECK**

* A hedge has been cleared by the small gateway by Cllr Pomeroy
* The inside of the hedge by the bench seats will be cut in the autumn

**1033. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk confirmed that the following correspondence had been circulated:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **FROM** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 03/05/2025 | Bere Marsh Farm | Walk and Talk for Shillingstone PC |
| 06/05/2025 | Carole Jones | Re: The Vale Pantry - Shillingstone PC grant - £ 250 |
| 07/05/2025 | Climate & Ecological | Notes from Climate Support meeting on 9 April |
| 07/05/2025 | Dorset CAN | Dorset CAN Newsletter - May 2025 |
| 13/05/2025 | Dorset Highways | TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF BERE MARSH, SHILLINGSTONE |
| 16/05/2025 | Dorset Police | April Stats |
| 19/05/2025 | Dorset Council | Dorset Local Plan – Parish and Town Council Event |
| 20/05/2025 | Sturminster Newsletter | Fw: What's Happening in Stur - Town Newsletter June |
| 30/05/2025 | Cllr Pauline Batstone | invitation Sturminster Newton Civic Event on Saturday 6 September 2025. |
| 03/06/2025 | Climate & Ecological | Next Climate and Nature Action Support meeting 9th June |

* **Bere Marsh Farm visit-** The PC will clarify possible dates for a ‘walk and talk’ visit in September
* **Sturminster Newton Town Council Civic function 6th September 2025** - Cllrs McNamara & Ridout will attend this event

**1034. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

* Confirmation of arrangements for Summer Event at the Old Ox
* Neighbourhood Plan refreshment update

**1035. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 17th July 2025 at 7:00 pm**, at the Portman Hall. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.10