

# **Fontmell Magna Parish Council**

## **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at St Andrews Primary School, Fontmell Magna at 7.00pm**

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**Present:** Cllr H Horstead (Chairman), Cllrs. C Bellers, M Humphreys, L Williams, and A Newbury

**In attendance:** M Wheatley – Clerk, and 14 members of the public.

### **Public Questions:**

A resident commented that he was very concerned about the shop and asked whether anyone had come forward with a plan for a Community Project. It was confirmed that some of the residents were trying to set up a Community Land Trust with a view to acquiring the shop. A Community Land Trust is a corporate body that can acquire housing and other assets on behalf of the community. Meetings had been held with Wessex Community Assets and with the Community Led Housing Enabler who were assisting with the registration of a Community Benefit Society which fits the definition of a Community Land Trust. There would be a public meeting shortly with a view to getting members to join the Society. The Society can then own the shop. It was anticipated that the Society would be registered within a month. The Society would be regulated by the FCA. No money would be raised until the Community Benefit Society had been set up and the landowner had been approached to see if there was anything that could be done. So the plan was to set up the Community Benefit Society approach the landowner and then fund raise. At some stage the Parish Council might be approached to have the shop registered as an Asset of Community Value.

A resident then asked about the Planning Working Group (“PWG”). The concern was that the PWG would be visiting neighbours and would be reporting to the Parish Council but were one step removed from the Parish Council. It was not clear who the members of the PWG were and who was reporting back to the Parish Council. Cllr. Bellers confirmed that at the meeting in January it had been agreed that the PWG would be asked to visit the site and any neighbours. However the PWG had decided not to take on this role. The PWG were therefore only looking at any planning application in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan and would report back to the Parish Council whether the applications complied with the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Bellers also confirmed he was working on a note outlining what happens when a planning application was received. Essentially this note described the process as is.

The resident then commented that when the Parish Council said they supported an application or otherwise the residents would not know whether this was the PWG saying this or the Parish Council. Cllr. Bellers confirmed that the PWG would only be looking at applications in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan and any decisions would be made by the Parish Council. The resident asked if the reports from the PWG could be published on the website. The Chairman then commented that as this was the last meeting with the current membership he thought this was a matter for the new Parish Council at the May meeting. The new Parish Council should look at this and formalise the arrangements quickly otherwise there would be misunderstandings. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed he did not see why the PWG reports should not be put on the website. The form was a pro-forms list of the Neighbourhood Plan policies and the PWG commented whether the application met the criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman then again said he thought this was a matter for the new Parish Council and it should be formalised quickly to avoid any confusion. Cllr. Humphreys then asked whether it was agreed that the reports would be published on the website. The Clerk asked who would do this. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed he would. The Chairman then confirmed that planning was on the agenda later and any proposals should be made then.

At the present this was a general talk seeking some consistency in dealing with planning applications. The resident asked whether it would be clear who was responsible for which bit of the form. It was confirmed that the PWG would be advisory and would make recommendations to the Parish Council but the Parish Council would be responsible for any decisions. The PWG have detailed knowledge of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council would take their views into account when considering any application. The Parish Council may not agree with the PWG but the Parish Council would discuss the PWG’s recommendations. The Chairman then confirmed that at the May meeting the Parish Council would consider how planning should be

organised and if anyone wished to make a brief statement they could put this in writing and send it to the Clerk for the May meeting.

There were no other topics raised.

**11/03/01 Apologies for Absence.** There were apologies for absence from Cllr. Langham – District Councillor and Cllr. Carr-Jones – County Councillor.

**11/03/02 Declarations of Interest.** Cllr. Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Village Hall.

**11/03/03 Parish Council Election 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019** – The Clerk confirmed that she had made an appointment to hand in the Councillors nomination forms on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. The Chairman would continue to be the Chairman until the Parish Council in May when he would step down and the new Chairman would be elected. Otherwise business carried on as usual and the Annual returns and end of year accounts would be approved at the meeting in May. The Clerk acknowledged that she had mistakenly put 3<sup>rd</sup> May on the agenda as the date of the election. The election was on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. Cllr. Humphreys asked whether another appeal for Councillors could be made through the Gossip Tree. With the Chairman and Cllr. Williams standing down there would only be 4 councillors on the Parish Council which was not enough. The Parish Council needed at 7 Councillors. Cllr. Bellers then asked about the deadline for handing in the forms. The Clerk confirmed whilst she had made an appointment for 22<sup>nd</sup> March to hand in the Councillors forms. The forms could be handed in personally by 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019. Cllr. Bellers confirmed he would put an item in the Gossip Tree. Cllr. Humphreys encouraged the residents present to stand and to encourage anyone they knew who might be interested to stand. This was a very important time for the Parish particularly given the prospect of there being a major development in the Parish.

**11/03/04 Minutes of the Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019.** The Clerk confirmed that she had revised the minutes in accordance with the comments made. The minutes were then approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

**11/03/05 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting.** Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that item 8 of the minutes needed to be updated as he had not mentioned the £250.00 contribution by the Village Hall Committee. Cllr. Humphreys would email the Clerk in this regard. There was also a query over item 9. It needed to be clarified whether the Parish Council had simply included the grant of £500.00 in the budget for next year or whether the intention was to write a cheque for this amount in the new financial year. It was agreed that this would be discussed further under item 10 (b) on the agenda.

**11/03/06 County Councillor and District Councillor's reports.** Correspondence from the County Councillor and District Councillor had been circulated. The Clerk confirmed there were no matters arising save that the Council Tax was going to be harmonised and this would mean a £49.00 increase for a band D property in North Dorset. It was confirmed that the Council Tax bills had already been delivered. It was agreed that letters of thanks would be sent to Cllr. Langham and Cllr. Carr-Jones thanking them for their help over their time in office.

**11/03/07 To consider Development Control Matters.**

**a. Applications/other matters considered since the last meeting as per the Schedule**

The Clerk confirmed that the following matters had been considered since the last meeting. The Parish Council had been consulted on the following applications

- Little Hartgrove Farm Gupples Lane Hartgrove - Change of use outbuilding to dwelling (retrospective). The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had had no objection to this application as the application was retrospective and had been being used as a dwelling for some time.
- Woodbridge Farm - Erect timber framed, cedar clad, single storey agriculture storage building (demolish existing garage) – there had been some objections to this application and various members of the Parish Council had visited the site and discussed the application with the applicants. The application had not been properly made and had therefore now been withdrawn. However a new application was likely to be made shortly. The Parish Council had therefore not commented on this application.

- 3 Marshlands Appeal – the LPA had turned down this application to build a house. The Parish Council had had no objection to the original application and had no additional comments on the appeal.

The Parish Council had not been consulted on the following applications but the Clerk had circulated them for information purposes and in case anyone had any comments.

- The Turnery, Fontmell Hill – this was an agricultural application for the installation of a concrete yard base
- Buildings at Lower Hartgrove Farm – this was also an agricultural application for the change of use
- Land at Fore Top Spread Eagle Hill – this was an application for the discharge of a condition
- 59 West St. – again this was an application for the discharge of a condition in this instance in relation to some doors. The Clerk explained that these type of applications were made when a condition had been imposed for example for a particular type of door and the Applicant was applying to say they had complied with that condition.

The Clerk also confirmed that Cllr. Long had visited the following sites who had made applications to carry out tree works and had concluded that there was no reason to object to the applications:

- Charlie's Cottage
- Brookfield
- Springhead
- West Lea
- 9 Penleas

- b. Applications to be considered – Tree Works - 4 Collyers Rise –** Cllr Long had visited the site and had viewed the yew which was not going to be felled but just tidied up. He did not see any reason to object to the proposed works. The Parish Council confirmed that no objection should be made.

Cllr. Bellers confirmed that the Ash tree by the school had finally been felled.

- c. Update on developments Mill St. & South St –** Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that with regard to the Mill St. development the decision would be made shortly and would be made by the Case Officer under delegated powers which means that the decision would be in line with the Parish Council's views that the application should be rejected. With regard to the South St. development Pennyfarthing Homes ("PFH") had recently approached the Parish Council to discuss some issues that had arisen during the course of their discussions with NDDC. The Parish Council had agreed that PFH should meet with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and that Group would then report back to the Parish Council. The meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and the issue boiled down to the type of development PFH could do. NDDC apply a levy on any developer for the development of infrastructure. NDDC do this by way of S106 agreements and not by way of a Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL"). NDDC had asked for £450,000.00 which would be used for schools and other community facilities including some in Blandford. This was far in excess of what PFH had included when they were doing their financial modelling for the development. They had allowed for a CIL contribution of around £160,000.00. They were therefore looking at two options:
- i. Increasing the number of homes on the site which would be open market homes and therefore increase their income;
  - ii. Changing the type of homes to be built. The suggestion was to keep the same percentage of affordable homes – 40% - but to change the type of homes so that more income would be generated. This would mean less social housing and more affordable housing.

Cllr. Humphreys confirmed he had made it clear that the Neighbourhood Plan had clear policies in respect of the housing density and the type of houses and they were expecting PFH to stick to these. Essentially PFH should reduce their profits rather than change the scheme. PFH had said they would produce a note for the Parish Council but no note had been sent. They were however meeting with NDDC the following day to discuss the S106 contributions further. The Chairman confirmed that this was essentially a matter for the District Council. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that PFH had approached the Parish Council to see if the Parish Council would support them but they had been told that they would be

expected to comply with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Williams confirmed he was not happy that PFH had approached the Parish Council and wanted to distance himself from any negotiations. He was concerned that if they had any support from the Parish Council this would be used in their negotiations with NDDC. He was opposed to the principle of the approach. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that the Parish Council had agreed what the best way to proceed was. The decision was now a matter for NDDC.

- d. **Planning Working Group (“PWG”)** – The Chairman confirmed that it had been agreed that this would be discussed further at the May meeting where the PWG could set out what they see as their role and their role can be properly formalised. Cllr. Bellers confirmed that the PWG would look at the applications but it was up to the Parish Council to decide what approach to take. At present it was not particularly clear what was being done. The PWG terms of reference were to be updated so that they can be reviewed at the May meeting .
- e. **Responses to Applications** – The Clerk confirmed she had included this item as part of the discussion with regard to planning.

**11/03/08 To consider report from the RFO** – The Clerk confirmed that the latest income and expenses and bank overview had been circulated to the Parish Council and that the balance as at 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 was £9,399.11.

**11/03/09 To resolve to pay Bills presented.** The Clerk had circulated a schedule showing the standing orders which had been paid since the last meeting. No invoices had been paid since the last meeting. There was one invoice to be paid which was for £36.00 for Parish online which was a mapping tool used by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. The Clerk confirmed she had discussed this invoice with Cllr. Humphreys and he had confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group thought this tool was still worth having. It was agreed that this invoice should be paid.

**11/03/010 Other Parish Matters**

- a. **Highways including update on A350/C13** – Cllr. Long confirmed that he had spoken to the project engineer responsible for the repairs on the C13 and had been advised that some problems had been encountered in Dinah’s Hollow and that they anticipated that the works would not now be completed until the end of April. Highways would be sending out more definite dates shortly. Cllr. Long had also been looking at solutions to the damage being done by the heavy traffic and the large trucks going through the village. At the moment there were only plastic bollards in place and he was discussing having these replaced by steel bollards. The wall opposite Parsonage St., had been hit and needed to be repaired. A kerb had been considered but this was not sufficient and he thought steel stanchions should be installed. He had emailed Highways today as no sign had been installed at the bottom of Mill St. to indicate this was not suitable for lorries. A new cul de sac sign at the top of Parsonage St. had been installed. A resident asked if the “pedestrians in the road” sign on the A350 north of the Village could be moved to the junction of the track of Croft Farm as it was not very visible where it was. Cllr. Long confirmed he would ask Highways if they could do this. The Clerk confirmed she and Cllr. Long had been talking to Highways about the drains in West View. She confirmed she had spoken to the Community Highways Officer that morning and he was waiting to hear from his team about the direction of the flow through the drains. Cllr. Long confirmed that when he and the Community Highways Officer had visited the site the Community Highways Officer had commented that there was no drain at the top of the hill and that that was the problem. Cllr. Long and the Clerk would continue to follow this up. Cllr. Bellers commented that the traffic through the village had increased by 50% following the closure of the C13. He also confirmed that it was anticipated that there would be more traffic through the village when Durweston Bridge was closed in June. The Clerk confirmed that assurances had been given that the bridge would not be closed at the same time as the C13 closure.
- b. **Village Hall request for grant** – The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee confirmed that some figures had been provided to the Parish Council. The Village Hall were looking for two grants one of £500.00 as a contribution to the running costs of the play area. This would be used to cover the insurance, the annual inspection and some basic repairs. The treasurer had confirmed that in the last 5 years the maintenance had cost £770 which was an average of £155.00. This together with the insurance and the inspection came to £467.00 which had been

rounded up to cover any increase in the insurance. The Village Hall also wanted a one off grant of £1500.00 to help cover the cost of repairing the play area. This would not go towards the cost of new equipment. This was going to be done separately and an appeal had been launched. The monies raised from the Christmas Fair were to be used to partially replace the equipment and were not going to be designated to repairs. The Village Hall had allocated £1000 out of its reserves for the repairs with a view to making the play area safe for the next 5 years. The cost of the works was £2700.00.

The state of the Village Hall finances was fragile. The income did not cover the expenditure although they were hoping this would not go on forever. The Village Hall wanted to build for the future rather than just repairing all the time. Cllr. Newbury confirmed that she now understood the applications and fully supported them. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed he was happy to give the grant for £500.00 but was confused why when the Village Hall had reserves of around £20,000.00 the Parish Council were being asked for a grant for £1500.00 out of the precept. He also commented that assuming the PFH development went ahead PFH had agreed to pay for new equipment for the play area. This was in their financial modelling for the site so there would be money for new play equipment. PFH had also agreed to improve the path from the site to the school. They had confirmed their commitment to this in the recent discussions. Cllr. Humphreys was not sure how long the Village would have to wait for this payment. It was confirmed that S106 payments were usually made once any development had been completed. Cllr. Williams confirmed that the money would be paid to the District Council who would then pay it to the Parish Council but if the District Council were generous they might advance the money before the end of the development. The Treasurer of the Village Hall confirmed that his reading of the Charity commission requirements was that the Village Hall should have 2 years of running costs in reserve. The Village Hall had increased its charges but they were using the reserves for the repairs. The S106 payment may or may not be made but if it was this would be a bonus. The money being requested was not for new equipment but for repairs.

Cllr. Bellers asked why the Parish Council were being asked to pay for more than 50% of the repairs. The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee confirmed that they were already raising money and were already borrowing from this. If they were to run an appeal they would need to show they had funds set aside for match funding.

Cllr. Humphreys confirmed he was concerned that this grant was coming out of the Parish Council reserves which were currently at the level of one year's precept. The Clerk confirmed that the rule of thumb was that the Parish Council should have one year's precept in reserve but this was a matter for the Parish Council.

Cllr. Newbury proposed that the Parish Council should pay the Village Hall £500.00 out of next year's budget to cover the maintenance costs. It was confirmed that this did not mean that the Parish Council would automatically pay this each year but the Village Hall could ask for another grants in the future. The Chairman reminded the Parish Council that the trustees of the Village Hall were responsible for the finances of the play area, the tennis court and the Village Hall. Cllr. Humphreys seconded the proposal and it was agreed with 5 councillors voting for and 1 abstaining to pay this grant at the beginning of the next financial year.

Cllr. Newbury then proposed that the Parish Council should pay £1500.00 out of its reserves towards the cost of re-surfacing the play area. Cllr. Bellers seconded this proposal. Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that he thought the Village Hall was a vital asset of the Parish and the Parish Council should contribute to its repair and maintenance. He was however concerned that the Parish Council were reducing their own reserves and he would like to lobby for an increased precept for the 2020/21 financial year. Cllr. Bellers commented that he thought the reserves were perfectly healthy and indeed the level of the reserves was too high. Cllr. Williams reluctantly agreed that the grant should be made but expressed his concern regarding the reduction of the reserves and hoped this would not set a dangerous precedent. The Parish Council agreed to pay the grant of £1500.00 out of its reserves with 5 in favour and 1 abstaining.

- c. **War Memorial** – The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had been sent a quote for the repair to the name on the War Memorial. Cllr. Bellers had suggested that this was quite expensive and further quotes should be obtained. The Clerk and Cllr. Bellers agreed to liaise regarding obtaining further quotes.

- d. **Grit Bins** - Cllr. Newbury confirmed she had asked the residents for comments regarding the placing of grit bins and whether there had been any accidents near the proposed spots. She had had some responses. Some requests were for bins on the main road which was not really appropriate as this road was gritted. It would also create a risk of accidents when people were trying to get to the grit. There had been no accidents in the spots put forward. She thought the cost of the bins and installing them would be in the region of £500 and given the cost did not think this could be taken any further. If it was to be taken any further the Parish Council would have to raise the precept to cover the cost. It was agreed that no further action would be taken. A resident asked whether the request for a bin at Collyers Rise had been considered as when there had been snow the bin lorry had not been able to get into the close. Cllr. Newbury confirmed she had considered this request and commented that even though the bin lorry had not been able to make a collection in the snow they had come back later to do the collection. The Parish Council confirmed it accepted Cllr. Newbury's recommendation.
- e. **Great British Spring Clean** – Cllr. Newbury confirmed that she had organised a litter pick for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and was proposing that the volunteers should meet at 10.30 or 11.00 either at the Village Hall or the pub. She would put a notice in the Gossip Tree. There would be high viz vests and picking tools available and the Dorset Waste Partnership would come and remove the collected waste. The Clerk confirmed that a risk assessment should be done and she would send one that had been used in one of her other Parishes. Volunteers were needed. The Village Hall confirmed they would be happy to offer tea and coffee for the pickers. Cllr. Newbury confirmed she would arrange for people to meet at the Village Hall.
- f. **NDDC Dog related Public Spaces Protection Order** – The Clerk confirmed that she thought the Village might want to order signage for the playing fields and the play area. The new order would not be enforceable without signage. Stickers cost £1 and signs £4. It was agreed that the Clerk would be informed how many signs were required. Cllr. Bellers asked whether signs should be put up on footpaths. The Clerk confirmed she would review the order as she was not sure the Order related to footpaths.

**11/03/011 Other Matters arising from Correspondence.** - Cllr. Humphreys confirmed that he had received an email regarding a talk on Cybercrime Awareness and Prevention. The Parish Council confirmed that this talk should be arranged for the beginning of one of the future Parish Council meetings but not the May 2019 meeting. There were no other matters arising from any correspondence.

**11/03/012 Date of Next Meeting/Annual Parish Meeting** – The next meeting will be on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.00pm. As in previous years this would also be the Annual Parish Meeting at which the clubs and societies within the Parish could report on their activities during the year. Cllr. Bellers confirmed he would put a notice in the Gossip Tree and ask the clubs and societies to confirm to the Clerk whether they were proposing to attend and if so to submit a short report to the Clerk by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

**11/03/013 A.O.B.** The Chairman confirmed he would not be standing at the election and thanked the Councillors and the Clerk for their support over the years. He wished the new Council well and confirmed he would attend the next meeting as Chairman until the new Chairman was elected. Cllr. Humphreys thanked the Chairman for his long years of service to the Parish Council and the community generally. His counsel on various issues would be missed. The Chairman also thanked Cllr. Williams for his years of service and for his advice particularly on planning.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.

Date

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Chairman, Fontmell Magna Parish Council