

Fontmell Magna Parish Council

Annual Report for 2018/19

1. Introduction

This annual report summarises the activities of the Parish Council (PC) over the past year ending 30th April 2019. The year has been dominated by the work needed to complete a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish and responding to planning applications for substantial housing development in the village. Also, the ongoing traffic issues surrounding the A350 and C13 roads linking Blandford and Shaftesbury were raised repeatedly by residents.

2. Governance

The PC met six times during the year, with the AGM and Annual Parish Meeting held in May, then five scheduled bimonthly meetings. The minutes of meetings of the PC and all significant associated documents are available on the Parish website <http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk>

From May 2018, the PC had a complement of 6 councillors and one vacancy, with the responsibilities shown below:

Howard Horstead (Chairman)	Development Control
Robin East	Highways (non-Councillor)
Chris Bellers	Footpaths
Michael Humphreys (Vice-Chair)	Neighbourhood Plan
Hannah Lister	Tree works
Gideon Roberts	
Leo Williams	Flood Warden

In May, Maggie Ayre resigned and Hannah Lister was co-opted. Following new Data Protection regulations, the PC approved an Information Audit, a new Privacy Policy and Freedom of Information Policy and a Privacy Notice for Councillors and any staff and a General Privacy Notice. In July, the Clerk confirmed that Gideon Roberts had resigned. In September, Annie Newbury was co-opted and the PC adopted a new Training Policy.

In November, Jeremy Long was co-opted to the PC. At the same time, Robin East, who had resigned as a councillor in January but had continued to represent the PC on matters relating to Highways and the A350 Community Group, stood down from that role; his place was taken by Jeremy. The PC offered its grateful thanks to Robin for his sterling work in battling with the Highway authorities over many years.

In January 2019, Hannah Lister resigned. Responsibility for Tree works was taken up by Jeremy. There was a review of councillor roles and the following were agreed:

Howard Horstead (Chairman)	
Chris Bellers	Footpaths/Rights of Way & Governance
Michael Humphreys (Vice-Chair)	District Liaison and Planning
Jeremy Long	Highways, Planning and Tree works
Annie Newbury	Environmental Protection and Social Infrastructure
Leo Williams	Flood Warden

With effect from 1st April, Dorset County Council and the District Councils were replaced by two new unitary authorities: Dorset Council; and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The new Dorset Council replaces the previous district and borough councils (East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland) and Dorset County Council. The new Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Council replaces the three existing councils of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole into one new council.

Only four of the current councillors have put themselves forward to serve on a new Parish Council for the next four years starting in May. Cllrs Horstead and Williams are stepping down and consequently there will be

vacancies for three new councillors to join the PC. The PC expresses its sincere thanks to both Howard and Leo for their many years of service to the parish. Residents are urged to come forward to fill the councillor vacancies in what will be an important period in determining the parish's future shape, particularly in respect of housing developments and village facilities and amenities. The PC needs to be at full strength to be effective in representing the community and dealing with the many issues that arise, and endeavouring to shape, protect and preserve the village and its surroundings that we all enjoy.

3. Finance

The financial year runs from April 2018 - March 2019. The PC started the financial year with a balance of £8,041 and closed the year with a balance of £8,924. Income was £10,453 and expenditure £10,349.

Main sources of income through the year were:

Parish precept	£7,000
Neighbourhood Plan grants	£2,428
Best Kept Village Conservation	£50
Interest	£4.80

The principal items of expenditure were:

Neighbourhood Plan	£2,615.80
Clerk's salary	£4,105
Insurance	£718.80
Maintenance/Noticeboard	£889 (£579.80 Bedchester Noticeboard)
Dorset Planning Consultant	£299.50
DAPTC/SLCC subs	£293.78
Training	£153.81
Website	£130
Grants	£700 (£500 Church, £200 Bedchester defibrillator)

Full details of income and expenditure through the year can be found on the Parish website.

The Parish precept for 2019/20 was set at £8,500. Precepts in previous years have been:

2018/19	£7,000
2017/18	£7,000
2016/17	£2,050
2015/16	£1,618
2014/15	£3,500
2013/14	£3,470
2012/13	£7,315

4. Neighbourhood Plan

In May 2018, the PC agreed an amendment to the management section of the Conservation Area Appraisal, as requested by DCC, forming part of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base. In July, the PC approved a Public Contributions list and sent it to NDDC. The PC approved the appointment of Examiner and, following his report, a number of changes were made to the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The revised Plan was then approved by the PC in September and, after a further public consultation, was put to a Referendum. This was held in November with 249 residents voting in favour and 23 against. On 28th November, NDDC formally made the Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan part of the Local Development Plan for the Fontmell Magna neighbourhood. In total, the Neighbourhood Plan cost around £16,700 to develop, of which about £15,300 was received by way of grants, meaning the cost to the PC was approximately £1,400.

The PC expressed its grateful thanks to the volunteers of the NP Working Group who worked diligently and conscientiously over the previous 3½ years to produce a plan and supporting documents that are strongly endorsed by residents. Now Fontmell Magna has a Neighbourhood Plan, the planning authorities are required to give the NP policies substantial weight in assessing planning applications for housing development. This should give the parish a strong voice in influencing the size, style and location of future developments and

other aspects of how the village and wider parish changes over time.

To take the Neighbourhood Plan forward, the PC set up the Planning Working Group (PWG). The PWG subsequently held two meetings and agreed its Terms of Reference. The PWG's function is limited to considering and reporting to the PC on new planning applications from the point of view of the Neighbourhood Plan, and to keep a tally of new dwellings. It should also keep up to date with changes in the planning environment, but we are not aware of any legislative changes over the period which could be expected to impact on the NP. It is not within the PWG's function to investigate or comment on issues relating to cases where permission has previously been granted, such as the destruction of the hedgerow in Mill Street, in connection with the agricultural entrance. These would be dealt with directly by the PC.

Since it came into force in November 2018, the NP has been referenced in considering a number of planning applications and has proven to provide a comprehensive set of criteria for objectively assessing the merits of each application. It has successfully informed the PC on whether to support or object to applications. See the Appendix for details of planning applications which the PWG has reviewed since its inception.

There may in future be cases where the PWG could assist the PC, for example consideration of the A350, and the provision of broadband or the improvement in the mobile network. For this to take place, the PWG would need to take on broader responsibilities, and to become a Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group. If the PC feels this would be helpful, the PWG would be happy to take the matter further.

5. Planning

The PC is consulted on all planning applications in the parish and assesses each one for their potential impact on the parish and benefits to the parish community. Some 28 planning applications were considered in 2018/19, with the PC raising objections to two: those in respect of 21 Lurmer Street and land south of Little Orchard, Parsonage Street. The PC also considered eight applications for tree works.

The PC continued to monitor the planning application for 29 homes on land north of Mill Street to which the PC objects. The PC continued its support for a housing development of 30 homes on land south of Home Farm.

The PC was asked to consider listing Middle Farm as an "important local building". It decided that the stable building was such, but the cottage was not.

6. Highways

Resurfacing of the A350 from Sutton Waldron through Fontmell Magna was completed with improved signage, extension of the 30mph limit, white lines and gateways at the north and south entrances to the village. In all, about 90% of the actions identified in the Fontmell Magna Traffic Management Scheme were completed.

In May, the PC agreed that it supported the A350 Community Group's mandate to lobby "on behalf of the residents and businesses on or near the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford Forum for improvements to the transport links, road infrastructure and safety in the north/south transport corridors of North Dorset.

7. Parish Projects

During the year, the PC has sought to improve parish amenities and facilities, including:

- A new notice board at Bedchester Crossroads.
- A defibrillator at the school, together with training in the Village Hall. Defibrillators were also installed by local initiatives of residents at Bedchester and Hartgrove.
- Maintenance of the Pump House.

The PC meeting in September was preceded by a presentation by Tom Balchin, Rural Engagement Officer, Dorset Police Rural Crime Team. The parish was awarded 2nd prize in the Conservation category of the Best Kept Village Competition 2018 for the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The PC investigated but, for various reasons, decided not to proceed with:

- A possible new permissive footpath between the entrance of St Andrew's View and the track to Croft Farm;
- A possible cycleway from Sutton Waldron;
- A new dog waste bin, to be situated near The Fontmell; and
- The need for more grit bins.

The PC supported Cranborne Chase AONB's bid to be an International Dark Sky Reserve. DCC decided to retain responsibility for the Bedchester allotments. The PC signed up for the Great British Spring Clean and awarded grants to support the play area at the Village Hall.

8. Plans for 2019/20

The PC will seek to achieve a range of improvements and targets in the coming year, including:

- Keeping the Neighbourhood Plan under review and ensuring planning applications are in line with its policies.
- Continuing to support the A350 Community Group to obtain an improved North/South route.
- Continuing to liaise with Pennyfarthing Homes regarding the proposed development in South Street.
- Agreeing a Planning Applications Policy to ensure that planning applications are dealt with efficiently in a transparent manner.
- Maintenance of the War Memorial and other village facilities owned by the PC.
- Improving liaison with the Police, patient participation groups and DAPTC.
- Continued support for defibrillators in the parish, and access for training.
- Supporting community litter picks.
- Entering the Dorset Best Kept Village Competition 2019.

In order to pursue these initiatives, the PC will seek support and volunteers from the parish community.

And finally – the PC wishes to thank Chris Bellers, for editing the informative and entertaining parish newsletter, The Gossip Tree, and to thank all distributors. Thanks also to Cllr. Langham and Cllr. Carr-Jones for their regular updates through the year. And thanks to all those who have served as parish councillors during the year, and the Clerk, for their work in supporting the parish.

Appendix

Planning Working Group Report date: 1 May 2019

Date Received	Reference	Report sent	PWG Members	Recommendation	No of new dwellings proposed	Outcome	No of new dwellings approved
27 Nov	2/2018/1581/LBC - 21 Lurmer Street	10 Dec	BR, DS	Qualified OK	-	Refused	-
5 Dec	2/2018/1684/VARIA - Crofts Farm House	10 Dec	DS RJMcC		-	Approved	-
5 Dec	2/2018/1693/4 HOUSE/LBC Bedchester House	10 Dec	DS, MH, RJMcC	Qualified OK	-		-
11 Dec	2/2018/1624/FUL Gore Farm Buildings			n/c	-	Approved	-
11 Dec	2/2018/1731/HOUSE - Little Hartgrove Farm	14 Dec	DS, RT, RK	No objection	-	Approved	-
14 Dec	2/2018/1111/FUL Gore farm Buildings			n/c	-	Withdrawn	-
23 Dec	2/2018/1448/AGDWPA St Andrew's Farm Barn	24 Dec		n/c	1	Refused	0
23 Dec	2/2018/1449/AGDWPA St Andrew's Farm Barn	24 Dec	RK, RJMcC	n/c	2	Refused	0
24 Jan	2/2018/1822/FUL Little Hartgrove Farm, Gupples Lane	10 Feb	BR, RK, RJMcC	No objection	1	Approve	1
30 Jan	2/2019/0106/DOC Land at Fore Top	10 Feb		n/c		Partially discharged	
4 Feb	2/2019/0007/FUL Woodbridge Farm	-		n/c	-	Withdrawn	
28 Feb	2/2018/1451/FUL Marshlands Penn Hill	-	-	Appeal			
6 Apr	2/2019/0322/FUL Woodbridge Farm	-		Support			
24 April	2/2019/0362/FUL - 75 Penn Hill Bedchester	2 May	CB, MH, DS	Support	0		