

Fontmell Magna Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.00pm, via the Zoom video conferencing platform

Present: Cllrs. M Humphreys (Chair), A Newbury, J Long, A Main and C Scott.

In attendance: Jane Somper – Dorset Councillor, S Smith (Clerk), 5 members of the public.

The Chair confirmed that Keri Jones (press from This is Alfred) was also present and that the meeting would be recorded. The Chair then started the meeting and asked if there were any public questions.

Public Questions: No issues raised.

08/03/01 Apologies for Absence: There were no apologies for absence.

08/03/02 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

08/03/03 Co-options: Christine Scott from West Street was co-opted to the Parish Council; the Chair welcomed Christine and thanked her for coming forward. Christine will focus on Social Infrastructure issues, covering assets, home watch, defibrillators, village shop liaison, broadband and mobile network coverage, recreation, allotments & village hall liaison. The Chair confirmed that there remain 2 Cllr vacancies on the FM Parish Council.

08/03/04 New Clerk: The Chair welcomed Sam Smith, now in post as Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer following a handover of files from the previous Clerk Marianne Wheatley. The Chair then thanked Marianne for her contribution during her time with the Parish Council.

08/03/05 Minutes of the Meeting on the 14th December 2020: The draft minutes were unanimously approved by the PC.

08/03/06 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on 14th December 2020:

- a. **Community Land Trust** - The CLT held its AGM (via Zoom) on the 4th March 2021; AM attended on behalf of the Parish Council as a shareholder. The Chair confirmed that he had received an email from the CLT regarding the Parish Council taking out a loan to contribute to the purchase of the shop freehold. It was confirmed that the Chair had requested the CLT provides a business plan for the shop.
- b. **Hedge on Lurmer Street** - Following complaints raised by residents, the Parish Council arranged for a protruding hedge along Lurmer Street to be cut back as it was a danger to traffic. It was found that an enclosed strand of 19 hawthorn trees contained 9 that were dead and could potentially fall into the road, representing a significant risk to pedestrians and traffic. The landowner has yet to be identified and Dorset Highways was approached but they declined to meet the cost of the tree felling. Because it is judged as an ongoing safety risk the PC has decided to meet the significant cost and commissioned the works to fell the dead trees. Replacement hawthorn trees will also be planted. It is estimated that this will cost the PC in the region of £800. This unforeseen cost was not originally accounted for in the PC budget.

- c. **Speed Restrictions** - Requests have been made for speed restrictions on the B3091 and the road from West Street to Hartgrove through Bedchester Crossroads. After careful and detailed review of both requests, they were deemed to fall outside of the Dorset Council Policy on speed restrictions. Residents who have requested speed restrictions on these two roads should access the Dorset Council/Highways web site where there is a clear and detailed account of Dorset Council's policy on speed restrictions on roads. Neither the B3091 nor the road from West Street to Hartgrove fall within the criteria stated in the Dorset Council policy. Regarding speeding through and exiting south of the Village, after careful and thorough examination of the situation it has been deemed that the current speed indicators through the village are the best that can be done, although this will be kept under review.
- d. **Speed Indicator A350** - A resident's suggestion to install a variable speed indicator (SID) along the A350 through the village has been researched. Highways has advised that the benefit would be marginal in reducing average traffic speeds and at over £3000 the cost is prohibitive for the PC. Community Speed Watch was discussed, especially in relation to speeding motorbikes.

08/03/07 Dorset Councillor's Report: Jane Somper's report is available on the PC website. JS reported on two successful ward meetings, to introduce Rico Dimarino as our Highways Community Officer and Graham Stanley the Ranger from Dorset Countryside. JS also advised that Dorset Council has secured £19m of funding from central Government to update its housing stock for energy efficiency by installing better insulation and heating systems. Dorset Council are currently campaigning to recruit more foster carers in the area.

08/03/08 Reports from the Parish Councillors:

- a. **Planning** - MH confirmed there had been nine new applications which were assessed by the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group; their reports are available on the PC website. The PC had no objection to six applications: Barn Cottage, 2 North St, Orchard Corner, Dairy Cottage, 8 Collyers Rise. The PC objected to three applications: Springhead Farm, 54 West Street, Home Mead Cottage. MH reported an update on the proposed large development near Home Farm, South St. The developer Pennyfarthing Homes is continuing discussion with Dorset planners on ecology mitigation and the S106 infrastructure levy. There is also a query with regards to the school drop off area. A decision on the planning application is expected in the next 2-3 months. 54 West Street has been requested via JS that it goes to the Planning Committee. The Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2018 and so therefore it may need updating in the near future due to the development of the new Dorset Local Plan.
- b. **Highways** - JL reported that residents had asked if raised curbs could be placed along Lurmer Street on the two corners where there is considerable damage to the properties. Unfortunately, in neither position is it possible to install raised curbs. Firstly, both properties are so close to the road that there would be serious possibility of damaging the foundations of the wall and the Barn. Secondly, the raised curbs would protrude into the road seriously narrowing the gap, thereby causing more difficulties for through traffic. The road surfaces along West Street and Gupples Lane are being reviewed by Highways as they are in a poor state. Any major repairs will be carried out and an update will be made as part of the County wide needs and requirements. There are works planned to improve the junction at Gore Clump which falls within our Parish.

- c. Environmental Protection** - AN reported that Wessex Water have been busy at the Bedchester Crossroads and a resident is unhappy at the number of road works being done and the disruption caused, but sadly we were not able to help. The resident will now contact Wessex Water directly to discuss. Posts in Bedchester layby are now back in place and later in the spring/summer Steve Radley will do the painting as required.
- d. Social Infrastructure** - AN reported that improved signage on the school defibrillator is in place. The Defibrillator monthly returns are completed. The PC has sponsored a planter for the Fontmell Friendship Garden. MH reported that 10 responses had been received from residents interested in the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme which ends in March 2021. Unfortunately, the deadline date was brought forward by the Government and residents have potentially missed out on joining the scheme. Details of any new funding schemes are awaited from Dorset Digital. There is still no date set for a litter pick owing to the COVID-19 restrictions, however it may be possible later in the year. AN had liaised with the Clerk to have 'Clean it Up' (dog waste) signs put along Penn Hill as requested by concerned residents. AN sat in on a couple of People's Assembly Zoom sessions to keep up to date with any environmental and climate change issues etc. that might be relevant to Fontmell Magna. Some interesting and useful ideas are being put forward, especially around the climate emergency focus and hopefully AN will be able to follow these ideas up with Jennifer Morisetti from Sustainable Dorset post-COVID. **Village Hall report:** The Village Hall Committee have been busy, and the hall has been redecorated during this lockdown. New grants have been obtained (lockdown) and their finances are in a good position for the moment. The Flower Garden Project being run by Sian Highnam has begun extremely well with lots of donations and volunteers involved. Events are now being planned. Sian has been busy promoting it in all the local media outlets including the Gossip Tree. The hall hopes to re open for events as soon as possible and a plan is in place for all appropriate social distancing measures. For the future CS has volunteered to take on the Village Hall liaison role from AN.
- e. District Liaison** - MH reported that he had responded on behalf of the PC to the draft Dorset Local Plan consultation, with comments and suggestions made in several areas including housing and climate change. The draft Local Plan places Fontmell Magna in tier 3 for housing development and proposes an allocation of 62 new homes over the planning period 2021-38. Dorset Council will commence a 'Community Governance Review' in July 2021. This happens every 10-15 years and enables parishes to request a change in a parish boundary, increase or decrease the number of Cllrs or abolish a PC, etc.
- f. Parish Communications** - A new blog has been started, called "Councillor's Chronicles". The idea is to communicate the workings of the Parish Council, the issues it tackles and problems it encounters, in representing the community of Fontmell Magna. The blog is intended to supplement the meeting minutes with more light-hearted and topical content
<http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/CouncillorsChronicles38120.aspx>
- g. Footpaths** – AM reported that a stile has been replaced on a footpath leading up to Fontmell Down. The footpath, leading up to the Lynchets, adjacent to the recently planted wood plantation, had become overrun with dog waste. Since signs were posted, there has been a substantial improvement. Thanks to Gary Payne's efforts the Middle Mill ponds have been substantially cleared of weed. He has been aided by the return of the swans which have eaten some of the less accessible weed. AM attended a footpath Zoom meeting hosted by Jane Somper, with Graham Stanley (Senior Dorset Ranger) which proved highly informative. AM has subsequently sought Graham's advice regarding the frequently used track on West

Street, which has recently been closed off. Overall, the Fontmell Magna footpath network appears to be in good condition.

Governance - MH and SS have received training on maintaining the Parish Council website. With Christine Scott joining the PC, a revised list of councillors' responsibilities is available on the website.

08/03/09 To consider report from the RFO: The Clerk confirmed that she had circulated the income and expenses to date. The available balance as of 8th March 2021 was **£9,790.13**

08/03/10 To resolve to pay Bills presented: The invoices and standing orders paid since the last meeting were set out in the Schedule, other payments were agreed as follows –
S Smith **£507.48** (Clerk's laptop & software)
Geosphere **£40.50** (Parish online license)
Lurmer Street hedge cutting - **£50.00** (invoice not received yet so agreed in advance for payment)

08/03/11 Other matters arising from recent correspondence:

Dorset Local Plan – see above, District Liaison.

National Census 2010 - The Chair confirmed he would put something on the PC website regarding the 21st March 2021 Census.

08/03/12 Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting, the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting, will be held on Monday 14th June at 7.00pm via Zoom videoconferencing. Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting are uncertain, being dependent upon the lifting of the Covid restrictions.

08/03/13 AOB: No issues raised.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm

Date
Council

Chair, Fontmell Magna Parish