



Clerk Katie Cooper
Email: Clerk@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk

Minutes of the Annual Parish and PC Meeting

Meeting of the Parish Council
which took place at The Village Hall, Fontmell Magna on:
Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 6.30pm

1. Welcome and apologies

Chairman, Hannah Lister welcomed the parishioners and councillors to the meeting.

Present: Cllr Hannah Lister (Chair), Cllr Laura Kurton, Cllr Anthony Bailey, Cllr Steve Drew, Cllr Christine Scott, Cllr Jeremy Long

Apologies: Cllr Steven Drew, Cllr Laura Kurton

2. Retiring Chairman to convene the meeting

Retiring Chairman, Hannah Lister convened the meeting

3. Parish Council Annual Report 2025 – 2025 – read by Cllr Lister

Fontmell Magna Parish Council – Chairman's End of Year Report

As we reach the end of the council year, I am pleased to reflect on the significant progress and achievements made by Fontmell Magna Parish Council throughout the past twelve months.

One of our most important initiatives was the submission of a formal proposal for a 20mph speed limit within the village. This measure, if approved, will contribute greatly to improving road safety and enhancing the overall quality of life for our residents.

We were proud to support the local community through the awarding of substantial grants, including vital funding for the Village Hall and for the restoration of Collyers Brook – an area of natural and historical importance. These grants are an investment in both the social and environmental wellbeing of the parish.

Public safety remains a top priority. This year, we installed a second defibrillator, located by the Village Shop, to improve access to life-saving equipment in the event of an emergency.

Following extensive consultation and community involvement, the Parish Council voted through the Neighbourhood Plan. We are delighted that Dorset Council has formally adopted the plan, giving us a stronger voice in guiding future development in a way that respects the character and needs of our parish.

Progress has also been made in addressing long-standing issues. Work to resolve the extensive flooding of West Street is now nearing completion – a vital step towards protecting properties and improving infrastructure resilience.



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In our statutory role, the Council has considered numerous planning applications. In several cases, we have offered well-founded objections where proposals were deemed to have a potentially negative impact on the character or sustainability of the parish.

Looking ahead to the coming year, the Council will continue to prioritise road safety, including further advocacy for the 20mph limit and other traffic calming measures. We will remain active in responding to planning applications, ensuring our community's voice is heard and respected. A key aim will be to recruit additional councillors to bring the Council back to full strength at seven members. We are also committed to ensuring the flooding issues on West Street are fully resolved, and to continuing our support for the wider parish and the many local clubs, societies, and groups that contribute so much to village life.

4. Reports from Parish Clubs, Societies and Groups

4.1 Highways (Peter Mole) - Community Speed Watch and 20's Plenty 2025

Community Speed Watch volunteers continue to regularly move the Speed Indicator Device on behalf of the Parish Council and to carry out roadside speed monitoring under the auspices of Dorset Police.

Vehicle speeds on the A350 remain at a dangerous level with roughly 30% of vehicles (60 per hour during the day) travelling at 35 mph or more in places where pedestrians walk, or are deterred from walking, where the road is narrow, winding and without footways. Unsafe speeds on other roads in Fontmell are commonplace. Dorset Police have identified the village as of particular concern and give us excellent support bearing in mind their resource constraints, but they are only responsible for enforcement, not speed limits, which were set for traffic conditions 90 years ago. The underlying issue of inadequate regulation of speeds which is the responsibility of Dorset Council has seen no progress despite the uniquely dangerous situation which would almost certainly have been addressed in almost all of the, more than 100 local authorities in the UK. The comprehensive second application for a 20mph application across the village, made in February clearly demonstrated that our original application was rejected on grounds which were not valid. The failure of progress with our current application is not something Dorset Council should feel proud of and emphasises the need for us to remain active to try and maintain reasonable levels of safety and quality of life.

The 20sPlenty organisation cites Fontmell Magna as the number one campaign for Dorset and continues to give us what support they can. I would welcome more volunteers to assist us with roadside speed monitoring which are convivial sessions and have a positive impact on addressing a dangerous road safety situation.

4.2 Village Hall (Rosie-Anne Yates)

The past year at the Village Hall has been a busy year with less visible changes and upgrades. We have successfully converted the charity to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) upon the advice of the Charity Commission. This involved a huge amount of work from Dick



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and Lisa preparing much of the paperwork before we engaged a solicitor to finalise the paperwork and complete the application. Part of this process involved us registering some of the Village Hall land with the Land Registry for the first time and finding originals of all the charity paperwork. Going forward this now gives better protection to the current and future Trustees and allows the charity to own property and land.

Another mammoth task undertaken this year was passing the high standards required to be accredited with Hallmark 1 and Hallmark 2. The Hallmark Quality Standard is a nationally recognized scheme for assessing the quality of community buildings and village halls. It aims to improve the management and operations of these facilities. It focuses on ensuring the hall complies with relevant laws and regulations including, health and safety, licensing, maintenance and security. We may yet have to do more once we receive further clarity on the implications of Martin's Law for our larger events. We are really thankful to Lisa who was amazing, updating ALL our policy and procedures to get us through. We can now proudly display the certificates and logos in the hall and website.

Some of you may have noticed the new bookings calendar on our website. We have purchased some booking software, Hallmaster, which has greatly helped the process of auto-generated invoicing for our Treasurer. Our caretaker and regular users and outside enquiries are all able to see what is happening or available in real-time. We have some fine tuning to do to make it help Sian as well.

We have also undertaken the refurbishment of the tennis court as part of our committed expenditure with the S106 money. This will be finally open for play on Friday 9 May. We hope to see our regular players back and we would be grateful if you could spread the word about our smart new court. We are the only pay and play court in the area. No membership to a club is required to use it. The last remaining project for refurbishment is the Ladies and Gents. This project is currently on hold pending a possible successful bid for the purchase of the surgery carpark.

Andrew has taken on responsibility for overseeing the weekly checks and maintenance of the hall and grounds. He is doing a superb job, liaising with Tash Harris over the playground, and quietly making sure everything is compliant, fixed and working. We have had one significant maintenance expenditure this year, the repair and upgrade of the sewage treatment plant. Sue Chippington has joined the team this year as an administrator for the Trustees. Her minute taking and organisational skills are fantastic. This has allowed Lisa to give up some of her work load in preparation for her retirement as a Trustee later this year.

After many years of loyal service our fantastic caretaker Pat retired. We can't thank her enough for all the work she did particularly through the difficult days of COVID. We wish her well in retirement but our truly thankful that Cath Allard has agreed to take over the post. This transition has been seamless.

The village hall is trying hard to balance the books. Our costs have risen, like everyone else's, and we have to be very mindful of our expenditure. We have had more bookings from outside



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thanks to Sian's amazing work as our bookings manager however, this is still not enough to cover all our costs. So to this end we have had to increase the fees for our regular and outside users to try to bridge the gap. The Parish Council are supporting the Village Hall with an annual grant to help pay for the lawn mowing and general maintenance of the outside space. Fundraising still has to be a part of this financial income in order for us to break even.

Finally, we'd like to thank everyone who does support the fundraising events and our regular Club events. They are all important to the village hall and our wider inclusive community.

Village Hall AGM – Wednesday 23rd July 2025 @ 7.00pm

4.3 Friendship Garden (Sian Highnam)

The Fontmell Friendship Garden is entering its second summer in its new location surrounding the village hall. Despite the disappointment in 2023 of the enforced move from the surgery, the new location has proved to be far better.

The garden is accessible to all and the new beds on the patio to the rear of the village hall and to the roadside have really enhanced the village hall building. As bookings manager, I have wonderful feedback about the hall and the garden and it definitely has a positive impact on bookings.

The garden is maintained by a fantastic group of villagers who join in our Friday potter and natter sessions from 11.30-1.00. We are joined during term time by four year 12 Clayesmore senior students and a teacher and are able to get a lot of work completed as a regular group of eight or nine.

Clayesmore Prep School students also complete Saturday sessions during the year and we continue to plant with St Andrew's Primary School and the Fontmell Under Nines.

Within the community, we planted Spring bulbs around the pub and will continue this initiative this Autumn to increase bulb stock.

Duane sold plants at the pub and we sold plants at cafes.

The pop-up cafes continued over the summer of 2024 and continued as coffee mornings and soup lunches in early Spring.

Pop up cafes will continue again later in the summer months of 2025.

We continue to be self-funding and have our big fundraiser on May 17th where we are selling flowers, vegetables, willow, sundries, bric a brac, hand tied bouquets, beauty products in addition to running a café, selling large cakes and being entertained by Claysmore Music department.



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This is Alfred continue to support us enthusiastically with regular interviews and advertising slots.

Our goals are to continue to provide a peaceful and beautiful environment for people to meet to potter, natter, sit, cut flowers to take home and embrace nature, providing a lovely green space area within the village for all to enjoy.

Thank you so very much to everyone who helps in so many ways – gardening, growing seeds, watering, making cakes, serving in the cafes and so much more. This would not be the success it is without the continued support and help from the village.

4.4 Fontmell Archives Society (Roger Hillman)

The Archive Society continues to fulfil its main objectives, which are to preserve and make available to all, the existing Village Archive Collection. It was started by the generous donations from the village for an exhibition in the Church in 1988 to celebrate 1100 years of Fontmell Magna. Our aim is to collect any historical information or material to save it for posterity and to share it with any interested people. We also receive new artefacts, photographs and texts which add to our understanding of the past in Fontmell Parish.

We are often contacted through our website by people worldwide who have links with the village, usually relatives of family who have lived here, often many years previously. It is very encouraging to know that what we do is valued by so many. Our membership has increased this year which has brought new enthusiastic support.

Another objective is to share with the wider society the interesting material that we hold in the Archive.

The Society celebrated its 25th Year with a three-day Exhibition “Fontmell Magna Parish at Work”. It was attended by around 170 people who greatly appreciated the effort of the small group of active members.

We continually add articles to our web site which can be accessed through fontmellmagna. net or through Parish Council or Village Hall portals.

Thirdly we have started to publish monthly in the Gossip Tree “**FACTS ABOUT FONTMELL MAGNA Did you know.....?**”

People have asked why we did not have a display for the VE Day 80th Celebrations. We tried but despite much research in our Archive, the Parish Magazines, and local newspapers of the time, we found no reference to any celebrations in the Village. The only relevant information was two sentences that said a **Victory Fete** was held in the VH field in the summer and that 500 people attended and around £119.00 was raised

(£4700.00 in today's money).



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At the AGM in January the Chairman stepped down after 17 years in the post and to date a replacement has not been found.

4.5 Fontmell Garden Club (written by Sue Chippington and read by Cllr Hannah Lister)

Firstly, apologies that I am unable to be here in person tonight.

The Garden Club continues to flourish with an active membership and programme of events throughout the year. The Committee had concerns that with the membership becoming increasingly elderly, the numbers attending would start to decline. There have been a few members who have sadly left us, and some deciding not to renew, including some of the younger members recruited last year, but the membership remains strong at 58. Several members are stepping down from the committee in October, but I am pleased to report that we have replacements prepared to take on the roles. Therefore, we will continue to organise a programme of speakers for the coming year, quizzes and social evenings and continue to maintain our links with Castle Gardens in Sherborne which provides us with benefits such as discounts at certain times of the year and free plug plants and bulbs for club competitions.

4.6 Ward report from Cllr Jane Somper

Beacon Ward ANNUAL Report to Parishes

Dorset Council

Cllr Jane Somper

MAY 2024-May2025

It has, as ever, been a busy year representing the Beacon Ward here in beautiful North Dorset. As I looked back through my calendar to prepare this report, I was struck by the number of home visits I've carried out, significantly more than previous years. The nature of the issues raised has been varied and often familiar (though one involving chicken noise was a first!). But one clear theme has emerged: a growing frustration from residents at the lack of response from Dorset Council.

Too many residents have found their emails and calls going unanswered. In speaking with other councillors, I've heard similar experiences. It appears the Council is retreating from one of its core responsibilities, providing timely and respectful responses to the people it serves. We don't expect instant solutions, but we do expect acknowledgment and some indication of when we can expect a reply. It is wrong that residents should need to keep chasing for updates on pressing issues, this erodes trust in Dorset Council.

There are also growing concerns about Dorset Council's performance in several other key areas:



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Too often, significant decisions affecting our communities are being taken behind closed doors or pushed through with minimal consultation. There's a growing sense that our local voices are being sidelined, especially in rural areas like ours heightening concerns around the democratic deficit.

While budgets are tight, there remains a lack of transparency about how funds are being prioritised. Many Councillors feel that spending is concentrated in urban centres such as Weymouth and Dorchester, while rural services are left to decline, particularly evident in the underfunding of transport and planning enforcement.

- **Planning Enforcement Inaction:** I've dealt with several cases this year where residents have raised legitimate concerns about planning breaches, only to see little or no enforcement action. This creates a dangerous precedent and undermines the integrity of the planning system.
- **Rural transport** continues to be a persistent concern. After sustained pressure, we are finally seeing signs of progress. It's too early to celebrate, but conversations are happening, and some movement has begun. I will continue pushing hard to ensure rural Dorset isn't left behind and will keep you updated as concrete developments emerge.

Positive Recognition

While there are concerns at the corporate level, there are also two exceptional teams working on the ground in the Beacon Ward who deserve credit for their reliability, hard work, and communication.

Highways Team

Despite a shrinking budget, our local Highways team continues to deliver. In particular, Community Highways Officer **Patrick Carpenter** deserves recognition. Patrick regularly patrols our roads, identifying potholes, damaged verges, and blocked drainage. His dedication goes above and beyond. On one occasion returning with a metal detector to locate a hidden drainage cover that was causing serious flooding in one village.

Waste and Recycling

The Waste Collection Team, led by supervisor **Darren Johnson**, also continues to impress. Missed bins are often followed up the same day, sometimes with Darren himself taking a small vehicle out to reach blocked or inaccessible areas. Most missed collections are caused by factors such as roadworks or obstructive parking, not by the operatives. Compared to what we see in some larger cities, our team is doing a fantastic job.

Speeding and Road Safety

Speeding remains a major concern on our small rural roads. I've been working with the Road Safety Team, on a number of traffic calming proposals. This team are facing staff pressures.



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After strong advocacy from the hard work of residents and myself, I'm pleased to report that Stour Provost is set to benefit from a new **20mph zone** in parts of the village, along with speed reduction measures on a section of the B3092.

I am also supporting similar efforts in other villages across the ward. These processes can be slow and outcomes are not guaranteed, but my motto remains: "**Never give up.**"

Thank you once again for your support, input, and engagement over the past year. I remain committed to being a visible and accessible representative for the Beacon Ward. Please do continue to get in touch, I'm always here to help.

For any ward work, please contact me at CllrJane.Somper@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

5. Any matters arising

There were no matters arising and the Annual Parish Meeting closed.



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**Annual General Meeting
Fontmell Magna Parish Council
Tuesday 20 May 2025
6.30pm
Fontmell Magna Village Hall**

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Laura Kurton and Cllr Steven Drew

2. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman 2025- 2026

Cllr Bailey proposed Cllr Lister to be Chairman with this unanimously agreed by the other councillors present.

Cllr Lister explained that whilst she was happy to remain Chair for the time being that in the future her work and family commitments may prevent her from remaining as Chair.

In the absence of Cllr Drew, no Vice Chair was elected. This will be discussed again at the next meeting in July 2025.

Signing of Declaration of Office – Cllr Lister signed her Declaration of Office and this was witnessed by the Clerk.

3. New councillors – to co-opt new councillor, Sara Powell

Sara Powell was proposed as a councillor by Cllr Lister. This was seconded by Cllr Long and unanimously agreed upon. Cllr Powell has signed her Declaration of Office and this was witnessed by the Clerk

4. Declarations of interest and dispensations

None declared

5. Approve minutes from AGM dated 19 May 2024

The Minutes from AGM dated 19 May 2024 were unanimously approved

6. Review and agreement of the terms of reference, code of conduct and standing orders

These were unanimously approved

7. Approve the governance statement (AGAR), annual accounts, notice of public rights and confirm no conflict of interest with BDO LLP

The Clerk presented the above and these were unanimously approved and will be sent to the auditor for approval. Once approved by the auditor they will be published on the website.

8. Assignment of Councillor responsibilities

- Community Reach – Cllr Hannah Lister



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- Environmental Protection – Cllr Christine Scott
- Social Infrastructure – Cllr Jeremy Long
- Parish Communications – Cllr Sara Powell
- Planning – Cllr Steven Drew



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Parish Council Meeting

1. Approve the minutes of the PC meeting held on the 18 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 March 2025 were unanimously approved.
Proposed by Cllr Lister and seconded by Cllr Long

The Minutes of the EGM held on the 15 April were also unanimously approved

2. Consider any matters arising from the March 2025 minutes

2.1 Update on sale of surgery and car park purchase

Rosie-Anne Yates gave an update earlier in the meeting regarding this. She confirmed that the surgery had gone to auction last Friday 16 May 2025 and that the hopeful couple were successful in making the purchase and have agreed that the Village Hall can purchase the car park. This is now going through conveyancing and it is hoped that as of the 13 June 2025, the carpark will belong to the Village Hall. Rosie-Anne was thanked for all her hard work on this.

2.2 Update on defibrillator phone box upgrade – Cllr Scott

Cllr Scott confirmed that the phone box upgrade is almost complete. It was agreed that signage in the village to indicate where all 3 defibrillators are located should be arranged. Cllr Scott said that she would be arranging to have a plaque made and a ribbon cut. A parishioner asked if there would be any further defibrillator training at any point? Cllr Scott explained that this had been done before, and another parishioner explained that it is self-explanatory and that she was happy to show the other parishioner if required.

There was another question about the requirement for codes (some defibrillators need codes to unlock them) and Cllr Scott will check this though it is thought that the ones we have in the parish don't require a code to unlock them.

2.3 Collyer's Brook – Cllr Scott

JW Building and Landscapes will be starting at the end of June. The work to be carried out is exempt from requiring a permit but it needs registering which Christine will do. This takes 10 days to acknowledge. Barbara Robbins explained that there was a need for flood ooms to divert the water so that the builder has a dry area to work in. There is a cost implication to this. So far Barbara has raised £650 but more donations are required by the end of the 1st week of June please.

2.4 20mph limit – Cllr Lister

See Peter Mole report in Parish Meeting minutes above. The 20mph proposal went in at the beginning of March 2025. For now we need to wait

2.5 Manhole issues – Cllr Drew

The original noisy manhole issues are resolved, though Cllr Drew is still following up regarding the U5's issue.

3 Planning update – Cllr Drew – see uploaded report on website for more information.



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Cllr Lister read Cllr Drew's report. The Twyford application is not within the parish. We were just informed because we are a neighbouring parish. Gupples Lane – supported by the Parish Council. Hartgrove is outside of the parish but supported as a neighbouring parish. Barn at Marshmoor Lodge – Cllr Lister explained that the councillors would look at this and respond in due course.

4 Footpaths – Gill Darwall

Nothing major to report. Andy Powell is happy to continue keeping the village paths clear of summer growth. Gill has walked all the footpaths within the parish and confirms that there is too much for Dorset Council to do. Thanks to Andy Powell for all his help with this.

5 Mobile phone signal – Cllr Lister

Cllr Lister explained that a survey had been sent and this will be reviewed properly in due course, but so far the parishioners seem to be in favour of a mast somewhere.

6. Any other business

7 Date of next meeting: 1 July 2025 – items for the agenda to the Parish Clerk by 16 June 2025

All members of the Council are requested to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out hereunder and are reminded that the council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder,
by Health and Safety and Human Rights.