

Minutes 2025

SUTTON WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 14th May 2025

MINUTES

Present: Chair David Smith

Councillors: John Ellis, Iain McNeil, Sandy Millard & Mike Asher

Clerk: Sam Smith

Dorset Councillor: Jane Somper

Members of the public: Gill Samways, Jane McNeil, Dick Hood, Sandra Jelbart, Martin Jelbart, Roger Snowdon & Tony Asher.

AGM

14/05/01 Election of Chairperson: All Councillors agreed with the proposal to re-elect Cllr David Smith as SWPC Chairman for another year.

14/05/02 Apologies for absence: Christl Pearson, Walter & Manya Steward

14/05/03 Declaration of Office & Register of Interests: All Cllrs signed their 'Acceptance of Office' forms for 2025/26. All ROI forms are up to date and available to view online via the Dorset Council website.

14/05/05 General Power of Competence: It was confirmed that due to the Clerk holding the CiLCA qualification and a 1/3 of the PC Cllrs having been elected that the PC meets the eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 s8.

END

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

14/05/01 Annual reports from various groups within the community:

WI report: by Sandra Jelbart. SWIM WI continues to thrive with its members, not only local, but also far reaching. There have been 2-year highlights over the past year - July was our open meeting with all members being invited. We were treated to a birds of prey display and a talk from a local international tennis umpire. The AGM was held in April where we said goodbye to our President & welcomed a new President to the role.

The Friends of St Bartholomew's Society: by Martin Jelbart. The society's annual report and financial statements were sent to members a couple of weeks ago. The AGM is to be held next Tuesday the 20th May 2025. The Church tower re rendering and the Owen Jones restoration project – the society has been supporting the PCC with the restoration of the Owen Jones wall painting and re rendering of the tower. Over the last 5 years the friends have advanced £2,500 to cover the majority of the conditional survey, obtaining the approvals need to be completed before a grant application could be submitted to the National Lottery. The National lottery does not fund all the work, so the 'Friends' are also providing an additional £7,000 towards the project.

Village Hall report: Jane McNeil gave the following report. We have welcomed 4 new committee members in the past year. The annual BBQ went well in the summer. The hall insurance premium doubled, as the hall is a wooden building, bringing the cost to over £800 per year. At the AGM in September, Ann Body resigned as Secretary & left the Committee. Gill Smith took her place. Film nights will hopefully re start before the end of May, we are waiting for the licence. The floor in the hall kitchen is collapsing, the cost of the repairs will have to come from hall funds. The hall now has a broadband/Wi-Fi connection thanks to Wessex Internet

PCC report: by Cllr Sandy Millard. See PC minutes

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Community Speed Watch: by Gill Samways. A SpeedWatch session was completed earlier in the week. It was very busy due to a local road closure. One person speeded up on purpose on seeing the SpeedWatch volunteers. A thank you was said to all involved in SpeedWatch from the PC.

END

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

14/05/01 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

14/05/02 Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12th of March 2025 were unanimously approved.

14/05/03 Matters Arising from the previous meeting:

a. DC Highways village visit March 2025 – Cllrs Smith & McNeil met with Patrick Carpenter our 'Community Highways Officer' to discuss a number of village highway issues. They visited the junction at Napier's Way. The DC Road Safety team have agreed to assess the junction, but this is not at the top of their list or a priority as no traffic accidents have been officially recorded for the site. All traffic accidents & near collisions can be reported online via the Dorset Council website. The blocked village drains in The Street were also discussed. After Patrick's visit, they were jetted by operatives, it hasn't rained since so we do not know if this has improved the flooding situation.

b. Fingerpost roundel repairs – Cllr McNeil showed everyone the repaired/refurbish roundel. This will be sited/erected either outside the Village Hall on a post or on the Village Hall itself. Cllr Mc Neil to organise this.

14/05/04 Correspondence/Other Parish Matters:

a. Report from Dorset Councillor: Cllr Jane Somper - 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: 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. I recently supported a motion declaring an **Economic Emergency** in Dorset. The damage done to local businesses by national policies has been significant, and support at a local level is now urgent. While the Council's powers are limited,

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it can take steps, such as targeted discretionary rate relief and prioritising local procurement to keep the “Dorset £” in Dorset and support our local economy **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, 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. After strong advocacy, 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.

b. Inspection of The Spinney, Bus Shelter & Telephone Box: In accordance with the Risk Management Policy the Chair confirmed The Spinney, the Bus Shelter and the Telephone Box had been inspected. Thank you to all the volunteers who tidied up The Spinney recently. Cllr McNeil will investigate/purchase the correct colour paint to give the telephone box a fresh coat.

c. Community speed watch: Report in APM minutes.

14/05/05 Planning Applications: No new applications received. A resident raised the issue of excessive tree felling at Sutton Waldron House. No tree applications have been received or submitted to DC.

14/05/06 Finance:

a. Bank & Cash Balance: The reconciled bank and cash balance as of 14th May 2025 was **£5,438.58**

b. Payments to be authorised: It was agreed that the following should be paid:

- S Smith **£116.30** (April wages & expenses)
- S Smith **£138.80** (May wages & expenses)
- Dorset Waste Partnership **£161.46** (annual emptying of the dog waste bin)
- Community 1st Trading **£227.94** (PC annual insurance)
- Normtec **£115.00** (SW roundel)
- DAPTC **£130.00** (PC annual membership subscription 2025/26)
- Lloyds Bank **£4.25** x 2 (monthly bank charges)

50% of the annual precept **£1,500** has been credited into the PC bank account.

A discussion was had on if to renew the DAPTC membership? The price has increased dramatically and do we get good value for money? It was agreed to continue for another year and review again in 2026. **PC insurance renewal 2025/26:** It was agreed to renew the annual PC insurance at a cost of **£227.94** per annum.

c. Annual Return for year end March 2025: The end of year accounts have been audited by Martin Jelbart and he has approved them for signing off. PC Cllrs thanked Martin and the Clerk for their timely preparation of the accounts. All Cllrs agreed it to approve the **Certificate of Exemption; Annual Governance Statement & the Accounting Statements for 2024/25**. The Chairman signed the documents. March 31st 2025 balance **£4,474.39**
For 2024/25 Income: **£3,000** Expenditure: **£2,853**.

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14/05/07 AOB/Open Forum: Nothing further raised.

14/05/08 Reports:

a. Footpaths: The narrow stile (by the stream) will be removed and rebuilt. There are also horses in the adjoining field with signs requesting that dogs are kept on leads.

b. Church report: Cllr Millard is no longer on the PPC. Phase 1 of the internal decoration at the church is completed. The contractor returns on the 19th to continue. A recent clear out of the vestry and boiler room unearthed some containers of chemicals and flammable liquid. These were disposed of responsibly by Cllr Asher & Dick Hood. External work on tower starts mid-June. Scaffolding will be around the tower until September 2025.

c. Village Hall report: in APM minutes

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on 10th September 2025

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Signed by the ChairmanDate.....