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SUTTON WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Wednesday 13th May 2026

MINUTES

Present: Chair David Smith

Councillors: Sandy Millard, Mike Asher & Iain McNeil

Clerk: Sam Smith

Dorset Councillor: Jane Somper - absent

Members of the public: Gill Samways, Jane McNeil, Dick Hood, Sandra & Martin Jelbart, John & Amanda Ellis, Walter Steward, Ian Pinder, Barbara Asher, David Kolb, Mike Stovold, Helen Dixie, Fiona Severn, Tony Asher.

AGM

13/05/01 Election of Chairperson: All Councillors agreed with the proposal to re-elect Cllr David Smith as SWPC Chairman for another year.

13/05/02 Apologies for absence: Jane Somper sent her apologies in advance of the meeting.

13/05/03 Declaration of Office & Register of Interests: Cllr Smith signed his 'Acceptance of Office' form for 2026/27. All ROI forms are up to date and available to view online via the Dorset Council website.

13/05/04 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

13/05/01 Annual reports from various groups within the community:

The Friends of St Bartholomew's Society: by Martin Jelbart - The society's AGM will be held next week in the Church, all are welcome, there will be a free glass of wine included. The main event of the past year was the completion of the Church tower re rendering and the Owen Jones restoration project. Over the last 5 years the 'Friends' have advanced £2,500 to cover the majority of the conditional survey & obtaining the approvals needed before a grant application could be submitted to the National Lottery. The National lottery did not fund all the work, so the 'Friends' also provided an additional £7,000 towards the project. The Society's total funding of the project was £9,500. The 'Friends' can only exist due to the support by its members & their donations through membership.

PCC report: by Barbara Asher - Last year the Church was closed from May to September 2025 for the Owen Jones restorations. All services during this period were held in the Village Hall. The 26th - 28th September was a celebration to mark the Church re-opening. An evening concert was held along with lectures and services. New lighting has been installed in the nave and chancel. The Owen Jones sub committee has produced a brochure with pictures & information etc on the project. Copies can be obtained free of charge from the Church. Thank you to Ian Pinder, Rod Swift & Jo Van Eijck for making the project so successful. Our Vicar is currently on a sabbatical for 3 months. There will be a 6-page spread on the Church in next month's Country Life Magazine (20th May). There will be a concert on Saturday 20th June 3pm with the Bournemouth Symphonic Choir, all welcome. Cost £8 per head including tea and cake. There are several trees with ash dieback in the Churchyard these will need to be felled in the future.

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WI report: by Sandra Jelbart. SWIM WI continues to thrive with its members, not only local, but also far reaching. SWIM will be 100 years old in 3 years' time, the same as the SW Village Hall. There have been a number of events, talks & presentations held in 2025/26. June and July 2026 are open meetings, all welcome.

Village Hall report: Amanda Ellis gave the following report. The AGM was held in September 2025 and here Jane McNeil stepped down from serving on the VH Committee. Village film nights are to continue. A BBQ was held at the end of June, thank you to Emily and Dan Childs for the use of their gardens & Ian McNeil & Nick Rymer for the food. A quiz night in November 2025 raised £400. The Easter Egg Hunt attracted 15 children and their families. Roger and Claire Snowden organised the annual Sutton Hill Walk & thank you to Paul & Sandy Millard for agreeing to access across their land. The recent plant sale has raised £375. Thank you to Rob Smith & Barry Matthews for their hedge cutting and ground maintenance work. £2,500 per annum is needed to keep the Hall up and running. The committee is currently looking into the future of the Hall and attempting to secure funding for refurbishment & maintenance etc.

END

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

13/05/01 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

13/05/02 Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in March 2026 were unanimously approved.

13/05/03 Matters Arising from the previous meeting:

a. 20mph speed limit in the village – Cllrs Asher & Smith have been speaking to Joe Allen at Dorset Council will regards to the possibility of introducing a 20mph speed limit to the village. These schemes are prioritised on criteria – number of road accidents, lack of pavements, blind corners, schools etc. Most of these high criteria areas now have a 20mph limit, so Dorset Council is now looking favourably on smaller/other villages that rate lower on these criteria. The PC would like to submit an application to explore the possibility of a 20mph speed limit in the village. A traffic survey will need to be completed at the PCs expense. The existing 30mph limit would become 20mph, with a possibility of a 30mph on the western outskirts. Compliance is more likely if the limit is restricted to the main village stretch only. The survey costs are £310 & £210 for 2 survey sites - 1 on the village street & 1 on the lane to the west. All Cllrs agreed to this spend of PC funds. There needs to be over whelming support from residents for the scheme to move forward. A consultation document, giving details of the scheme, will go through all letterboxes soon asking for a simple yes or no in reply. The Clerk highlighted that driving over the traffic cables (survey) slower would advance our cause better than faster, as the survey needs to show that the average speed is 24mph or lower. All agreed that the PC will submit an application to DC.

b. PC Cllr vacancy – Due to the resignation of Cllr John Ellis there is a vacancy on the PC. The vacancy has been advertised on the noticeboard for the required amount of time/notice. It was agreed by all to carry on with 4 PC Cllrs until another applicant comes forward.

13/05/04 Correspondence/Other Parish Matters:

a. Report from Dorset Councillor: Cllr Jane Somper **Annual Report to Parish Councils 2025 - 2026** This report provides an overview of the work undertaken over the past year across Beacon Ward. It has been a challenging year for many residents, particularly with regard to flooding, highways disruption, and access to services in our rural communities. Throughout, my focus has remained on ensuring that the concerns of our parishes are heard and acted upon, and where necessary, pressing Dorset Council officers for responses and progress.

15 Years Serving Our Community This week/month a personal milestone: 15 years since I was first elected to public office. In 2011, I was proud to be elected as a District Councillor for North Dorset District Council. I was re-elected in 2015 and, following the creation of Dorset Council,

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again in 2019 and most recently in 2024. Each time, I've been humbled by the trust placed in me and remain grateful for the support of our community.

What a journey it has been. I've had the privilege of serving as

- Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee
- Lead Member for both Children's Services and Adults Services
- Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing

And now, I continue to serve as:

- Opposition Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing
- Member of the Farming Panel
- Working alongside the Chairman of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee
- Recently appointed to the Licensing Committee

Along the way, I've attended thousands of parish council meetings and met with hundreds of residents, discussing everything from housing benefits, transport, flooding, highways, rural business challenges, and road safety and even the odd lamp post and bus stop issue (I must chase this last point up). These conversations have shaped my work and reminded me daily why I do this, to help people. Local government isn't always headline-making, but it is where real, lasting change begins, close to the ground and close to the people. Every meeting, every call, every case I've taken up has mattered. This is a team effort. Thank you for your continued trust and support. I remain committed to standing up for our community and delivering practical solutions to real challenges.

Highways & Transport A significant amount of work this year has centred around the Dinah's Hollow slope stabilisation project and the subsequent changes along the A350, including traffic lights and speed restrictions. While we were told by Dorset council that these measures have been necessary from a safety and engineering perspective, they have understandably proved unpopular with a growing number of residents along the route. I continue to raise these concerns and push for a balanced approach that considers both safety and the day-to-day impact on those living and travelling through the area. I have been pleased to support 20mph applications in Stour Provost, Ashmore and Hammoon, demonstrating that this policy can work well when supported locally. However, I am still awaiting a decision regarding the 20mph scheme in Fontmell Magna, which was expected earlier this year but has been deferred. At present, there is no clear indication from officers as to the likely outcome, and I continue to press for clarity. The Group working alongside the Parish Council has been instrumental in pushing for transparency on any decision made in Fontmell Magna, an important part of the decision-making process.

Flooding & Resilience Flooding has been one of the most serious issues affecting the ward this year, impacting homes, businesses, and causing damage to sections of the road network. Under very difficult circumstances, the response from highways teams has been strong, and I would like to acknowledge their efforts during both the immediate response and the ongoing repair work. Looking ahead, there remains concerning uncertainty around the previously announced £5 million for flood resilience projects. There is currently a lack of clarity on both timing and how this funding will be fairly allocated. One project in Shroton has been a particular focus. I have been working closely with officers, the parish council, and the local flood warden on a scheme that we believe would significantly reduce flood risk in the village. I continue to press for confirmation that this project will receive funding and move forward.

Community Transport & Rural Isolation The lack of meaningful community transport remains a growing concern across our villages. For residents who do not drive, this continues to contribute to isolation and difficulty accessing essential services. Dorset Council under the current administration has produced a significant number of strategies and aspirational statements this year, but these have yet to translate into meaningful change on the ground. For residents, the day-to-day reality remains largely unchanged, and the lack of tangible progress is both noticeable and increasingly frustrating. I will continue to advocate for a properly funded and functional community transport network that meets the needs of rural areas.

Dorset Council Engagement & North Dorset Representation A recurring concern I have raised throughout the year is the lack of focus on North Dorset within Dorset Council decision-making. Too often, it feels that our area is overlooked or considered as an afterthought when policies are developed or resources are allocated. This is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore and is a growing concern for many members representing this part of the county. I have consistently made this point, alongside fellow North Dorset councillors, to ensure that our communities are properly

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considered and not disadvantaged by a lack of visibility at county level. In addition, I have had to intervene on several occasions to assist residents in obtaining responses from Dorset Council to what should be straightforward enquiries. Despite ongoing restructuring within customer services, improvements in response times are not yet being consistently experienced.

There are, however, positive exceptions, particularly within Highways, where officers continue to respond effectively when required.

Financial Pressures & Council Tax Dorset Council continues to face significant financial pressures, particularly in relation to adult and children's care services, which together account for over half of the council's total budget. However, concern is growing that these financial pressures are not being brought under sufficient control, with continued overspend creating an increasingly difficult position. This sits alongside the recent decision to raise council tax to the maximum level, at a time when many residents are not seeing corresponding improvements in day-to-day services. Dorset now has the highest council tax level in the country, which both I and residents are finding difficult to justify. For clarity, I did not support this increase at the Full Council budget meeting, as I believe greater assurance is needed that costs are being effectively managed and that residents are seeing value from the contributions they make.

Looking Ahead

Key priorities for the coming year include

- Securing progress and funding for flood resilience projects
- Continued monitoring and review of A350 traffic measures
- Clarity on outstanding 20mph decisions
- Progress towards a viable rural community transport network
- Ensuring North Dorset receives fair consideration in decision-making and resource allocation
- Improving communication and responsiveness from Dorset Council

Working with Parish Councils remain grateful for the continued engagement, support, and persistence of parish councillors and clerks across Beacon Ward. Your local knowledge is essential in ensuring issues are identified early and properly followed through. 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. The refurbished fingerpost roundel is now installed above the door at the Village Hall. Our internal auditor (Martin Jelbert) highlighted the issue of who is responsible for insuring the roundel and liability etc. It was agreed that the roundel is the PCs property/responsibility & will in the future be included in this section of the minutes and the roundel will be added to the PC insurance cover.

c. Community speed watch: On the 22nd April 2026 the group took part in a Countrywide Speed Watch initiative. 14 vehicles were recorded exceeding the limit. The team is currently depleted for various reasons, and more Speed Watch volunteers are needed.

d. Adopt PC IT Policy: The PC is required to have an IT Policy in place. A draft copy had been circulated prior to the meeting by The Clerk. The draft policy (a recommended template) is very extensive for our needs, but it could be amended or made simpler in the future. It was agreed that the Clerk should have a dedicated laptop for PC use and The Clerk will also set up individual PC email addresses for each PC Cllr. All agreed to adopt the proposed IT Policy which will be posted on the PC website.

e. PC insurance 2026/27: It was agreed to renew the annual PC insurance at a cost of **£281.67** per annum for another 3-year fixed term. The Clerk will add the roundel to the policy.

13/05/05 Planning Applications: P/OUT/2026/01593 proposal: erection of up to 23 dwellings and associated infrastructure (outline application to determine access only) location: land At E 386450 N 116625, Old Crown Road, Fontmell Magna. The SWPC has submitted an **objection** to Dorset Council with regards to this application.

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13/05/06 Finance:

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

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|---|---|
| - S Smith £125.39 | April wages & expenses |
| - S Smith £142.20 | May wages & expenses |
| - HMRC £28.80 & £28.60 | Clerks PAYE |
| - Vision ICT £209.44 | PC website & email annual fee |
| - Dorset Waste Partnership £166.92 | annual emptying of the dog waste bin |
| - Community 1 st Trading £281.67 | PC annual insurance 2026/27 |
| - DAPTC £134.55 | PC annual membership subscription 2026/27 |
| - Lloyds Bank £4.25 x 2 | monthly bank charges |

The reconciled bank and cash balance as of 13th May 2026 was **£4,823.08** in the savings account & **£952.95** in the current account. 50% of the annual precept **£1,650.00** has been credited into the PC bank account. Updating the PC account bank signatories – this can now be done online so the process should be quicker and more straight forward. Claire Aartsen & John Ellis need to be removed. It was agreed to add Cllrs Millard & Asher. Clerk to action.

b. Annual Return for year end March 2026: 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 2025/26**. The Chairman signed the documents. For 2025/26 Income: **£3,125.00** Expenditure: **£3,010.00**.

13/05/07 AOB/Open Forum: Amanda Ellis raised the possibility of the PC updating the Parish Plan. There was some confusion over the role of a Parish Plan V a Neighbour Plan. Martin Jelbert (who was involved in the original PP) stated that the objectives of the Parish Plan had been achieved. It was suggested that an updated plan could be an assessment of the village assets. Are we meeting the needs of the community going forward? Can the Village Hall etc be viable in the future etc.

13/05/08 Reports:

a. Footpaths: Dick Hood nothing to report

b. Church report: nothing to report

c. Village Hall report: nothing to report

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on 9th September 2026

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.34pm.

Signed by the ChairmanDate.....