

**Minutes of Holt Annual Parish Meeting
Held Friday 17th March 2023 at Holt Village Hall 7:30pm**

Item	
	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Cllr Geoff Chopping Cllr Jonathan Cutts (Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council) Cllr Jackie Egan Cllr Peter Finney Cllr Wrettham Ladbrooke-Chartres Cllr Celia Moore (Chairman of the Parish Council) Cllr Guy Reynolds Cllr Janet Wallace Mrs Lisa Goodwin (Clerk to the Parish Council) Cllr Robin Cook (Dorset Councillor Stour & Allen Vale Ward) 18 members of public.</p>
01	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed those present.</p>
02	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Val Potheary (Chairman Dorset Council) Bob & Elaine Hazel Sara & Mr Turnbull</p>
03	<p>Guest Speaker</p> <p>Geoff Taylor & Vanessa Joseph of the East Dorset Antiquarian Society gave a fascinating presentation on their excavation and discoveries at Wimborne All Hallows Church.</p>
04	<p>Awards 2023</p> <p>The Parish Council is pleased to have presented this year's Good Citizen Award to Mrs Sara Turnbull as an outstanding member of the parish for her valued contribution toward the community including as Church Warden, involvement with the Village Voices magazine and the District Neighbourcare Scheme since its inception in 2008. Unfortunately Sara was not able to attend to collect her certificate and voucher to spend at Stewarts Garden Centre this evening.</p>

	<p>Introduced this year for the first time was the Youth Award, presented to Evie Willis of Bothenwood for her pro-active nature in approaching both Dorset Council and the Parish Council to express her concerns over safe walking to and from the school bus stops. Evie was presented with her Certificate and Voucher by Cllr Robin Cook.</p> <p>And finally, Special Recognition Awards this year for Tom Humphrey and Ollie Strudwick who were nominated for their quick actions in response to a fire at Post Cottage on Holt Green. They alerted the owners to the fire, called the fire brigade and assisted in removing possessions to safety. Tom and Ollie were presented with their Certificates and Vouchers by Cllr Robin Cook.</p>
<p>05</p>	<p>Confirm the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held 18th March 2023</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Peter Finney and seconded by Cllr Wrettham Ladbrooke-Chartres that the minutes of the last meeting held 18th March 2022 are confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman. Agreed.</p>
<p>06</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>07</p>	<p>Annual Report of the Parish Council (which will be published on the website and Village Voices magazine) by Vice Chairman Cllr Jonathan Cutts</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Holt Parish Council – Annual Report 2022 / 2023</u></p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>It's hard to imagine that a year has passed since the last Parish Annual meeting. Throughout the year the Council has continued to meet on a monthly basis in the Parish Hall. It's also been good to see residents regularly attending and contributing towards the meetings.</p> <p>This year we have again seen changes in the Parish Councillors. Richard Walsh and Andrew Wilson have both stepped down and we'd like to thank them both for all their work and support whilst being on the Council.</p> <p>We were pleased to welcome Geoffrey Chopping to the Parish Council but this leaves a vacancy. If anyone would like to join or knows of someone who might wish to, please let us know.</p> <p>Some of the main activities and highlights of the Parish Council through the last year are summarized as follows: -</p> <p><u>Planning</u></p> <p>Planning remains a substantial part of the Parish Councils work and during the year we received approximately 40 planning applications.</p>

Although some of these are more contentious than others, the Council always strives to support the right balance between appropriate development and the preservation of our rural Parish.

Issues with planning enforcement are also still brought to our attention. In some cases, the apparent lack of proper enforcement around planning and development has been a concern and the Council continues to provide help and support for this where it can.

Highways and Traffic

Traffic within the Parish remains a constant item on the Council's agenda. The Council continues to receive regular feedback and issues from residents and it's an area of concern. The separate Traffic Working Group continues to be in direct dialogue with Dorset Council on a range of matters and possible traffic calming measures. As part of our current discussions we have submitted some specific proposals, which include:

- Collecting road survey data
- Speed limit zone extensions
- Painted visual road narrowing

Further information regarding this is available on the Parish web site, which will be kept up to date.

Finally, the Council is very aware of the impact that traffic has within the Parish and we'll continue working with you and Dorset Council to try and introduce some realistic measures to try and improve it.

Community Speed Watch Group

We are pleased let you know that we have established and trained a Community Speed Watch Group, which currently has 13 members. So far the group has met for 3 sessions over the winter period and the plan is to keep these going on a regular basis as the weather and daylight improves.

We'd like to thank Maria Attwood and Janice Beck from Dorset Police for their help in setting this up and providing their valuable support.

If there is anyone else who is interested in joining the group then please do let us know.

Dorset Community Governance Review - Parish Boundaries

Last year, as part of the Dorset Community Governance Review, the Parish Council commented on the proposed changes to the Parish boundary. In particular this included the lobe of Furzehill possibly joining Holt Parish and, based on our own discussions and the clear feedback from Furzehill residents, we gave this our support.

The CGR for Dorset Council has since been completed which means that from April 2024 the Furzehill Lobe will be part of Holt Parish.

There has, however, been another CGR, which is affecting Holt Parish in the area of Gaunts Common. The initial draft recommendations for this have been announced and at the moment it's proposed by Dorset Council that there should be no change.

Initially the Vale of Allen Parish Council proposed that parts of Gaunts Common should move into Holt Parish and other parts into Hinton. Holt Parish Council didn't necessarily support this

and neither did the Council want to support any move into the Parish, unless it was fully supported by the local residents. Dorset Council received very few responses to the first consultation and so no change is proposed at the moment.
If, however, residents of Gaunts Common would like to request a change then it still possible to do by contacting Dorset Council for the second and final consultations.

Telephone Kiosks

We were sad to see the theft of one of our historic red telephone kiosks at Holtwood but we are pleased to say that this has been replaced and is in the process of being renovated by Holtwood Community Farm. We would like to thank them for their help in taking this on. The telephone kiosk at Broomhill has also been refurbished and we are grateful to Stewarts Garden Centre for providing the flowers and boxes that looked so good during last summer. We'd also like to thank all those local residents who helped to look after the flowers.

Village Green

In conjunction with the National Trust the Council continues to look after the Village Green. The Council hopes that this continues to be a peaceful and open space for everyone to use and enjoy.

We'd also like to thank the National Trust for the kind donation of 3 cherry trees, which have been planted. The 'Tommy' remembrance figure has also been installed.

Public Footpaths & Rights of Way

In conjunction with the National Trust and other landowners we have continued to monitor the network of footpaths and rights of way across the Parish.

The Council will endeavour to keep the paths and bridleways accessible but we are always looking for new volunteers to help with this and if anyone is interested in lending a hand then please let us know.

Cemetery

The Parish Council continues to have responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Cemetery. This includes cutting the grass and looking after the boundaries and memorials. During the year there have been 4 full burials and 3 lots of ashes laid to rest.

Once again we would like to thank Charlie Hiscock and Mike Clifford for their help in continuing to look after the cemetery and also to Ian Mulliner for his continued efforts helping to keep the moles under control.

Additional thanks

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who continues to help the Parish and it's residents. This list is not exhaustive but the Parish Council would also like to thank: -

	<p>Cllr Robin Cook We continue to be represented at Dorset Council by Cllr Cook and we would like to thank him for all the time that he gives to the Parish together with his support and advise.</p> <p>Richard Lonsdale Since Richard stepped down as a Parish Councillor he continues to help the highways working group with his excellent data analysis and also mending noticeboards and lending a hand with the telephone boxes.</p> <p>Ann Korta Ann for her continued help with the Neighbourcare Car Scheme and to the rest of the Parish Hall Committee, for looking after the Hall so well.</p> <p>Lisa Goodwin our Parish Clerk The Parish Council would simply be unable to function without all of Lisa's hard work and we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all that she does on all of our behalf.</p>
<p>08</p>	<p>Matters arising from the Annual Report.</p> <p>Mr Richard Lonsdale asked when the BT Box at Furzehill will be straightened up. The Clerk will chase up the building contractor who has agreed to do this work.</p>
<p>09</p>	<p>Audited Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2022</p> <p>The audited accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 were displayed for members of the public to view and have been available to view on the parish council website www.holtparishcouncil.org.uk</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Dorset Council Annual Report from Cllr Robin Cook</p> <p>Firstly, Cllr Robin Cook thanked members for their hard work throughout the past year and whilst Cllr Cook attends Parish Council meetings regularly, he can be contacted directly by residents on any matters of concern.</p> <p>This report is a summary of some of the 2022 headlines from Dorset Council which I hope you will find of interest. With time constraints tonight I can only scratch the surface and am happy to discuss more detail with residents outside of this meeting.</p> <p><u>Dorset Local Plan</u></p> <p>During the year I reported that the Leader of Council set out his commitment to develop a new Dorset Council Local Plan that meets the needs and aspirations of the people of Dorset. He wrote to Michael Gove with his aspirations, had meetings with him and various members of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). I am pleased to report</p>

that there will be a reshaping and changes to the timetable.

We received an unprecedented 9,000 responses to our consultation on the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. In summary, respondents told us we should:

- Challenge the housing numbers – they should reflect needs of Dorset, not blindly follow a government calculation, and not include housing for BCP Council.
- Support building more affordable housing across the area, helping working families and young people to live in Dorset.
- Protect Dorset's unique natural environment.
- Tackle climate change as our leading priority, ensuring the Dorset Council Local Plan and our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and action plan are fully aligned.
- Consider the infrastructure requirements of new development: public transport, roads, health and education services, utilities to ensure the needs of residents are met.

We are now at a point where we can confirm:

- That the adoption of the new Dorset Council Local Plan is now expected in 2026. This gives us more time to develop the plan. (Previously we were aiming for adoption in 2023/4)
- Dorset to be a pilot for the new national approach to local plans being introduced through revised national policy and legislation. This will allow Dorset to take advantage of the improvements we fully expect to be enacted, including a genuinely plan-led system that has been shaped by engagement with our communities, make use of support from Government and where development accords with what the plan sets out, streamlined processes and a national suite of development management policies.
- As part of this, the Government is planning to remove the 'duty to cooperate' which currently requires us to take account of unmet needs that our neighbouring authorities such as that BCP Council cannot deliver. The changes will mean Dorset can focus on a strategy that is right for us in meeting our needs.

We also recognise that access to affordable housing is currently a challenge for some Dorset residents. More affordable housing needs to be built, but we need the right development in the right places, at the right quality which respects our unique and important natural environment.

Working with Homes England there will be more focus on new or significantly expanded settlements to help deliver the longer-term growth needs of Dorset, with the necessary infrastructure (transport, utilities, health, and education services)

We want greater recognition of our Climate and Ecological Emergency commitments in locally produced planning policy.

Dorset Council's aspiration is to provide a framework for long-term sustainable development

that meets housing needs, delivers national and local net zero carbon and biodiversity targets, and ensures development is supported by essential infrastructure.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from Government of a temporary exemption from housing land supply requirements until the new Dorset Council Local Plan is adopted, so we can protect Dorset from harmful unplanned development in the interim period.

Planning service

At last year's annual meeting I reported that since the formation of the unitary council, the planning service was not performing well. This was due in part to the pandemic which, because of the working from home rules, made the planning officers job challenging. In addition, during the COVID crisis the number of planning applications went through the roof as so many people decided they wanted to expand their home due partly to the rise in home working, the difficulties around house selling and buying and the need for more living space around them.

This was exacerbated by the need to converge the systems from the previous five district and borough councils which was a very complex operation. That work was completed in 2022, and together with additional resources, the system is working much more efficiently and much of the backlog and delays which were so frustrating for all of us have been reduced.

Planning issues, together with highway matters, takes up more of my inbox than any other subject. Some interesting facts – in 2022 40% of planning applications were for Holt parish, the remaining 60% spread among the other six parishes in my ward, so it is not surprising that there is a high level of queries raised from this community.

Council budget

Dorset Council's budget of £348m for 2023-24 was approved by councillors at the full council meeting on 14 February 2023. This continues the council's commitment to maintain frontline services, without the need for cuts to balance the budget. Dorset Council provides around 450 different services to just under 380,000 residents. This year's budget setting exercise took place against a national background of extreme pressures for councils. These pressures include the high level of inflation which affects the cost of delivering council services, and also the continued growth in need for social care services as a result of the ageing population.

Council tax will increase by just under 2% and the adult social care precept by 2%. This is less than the maximum 5% increase available to councils, as outlined in the Government's Spending Review in December 2022. The increase is equivalent to £1.40 extra per week for a Band D property. This is a balanced budget in a national context of significant financial challenge. Our overriding aim has been to protect the essential frontline council services on which local residents and businesses rely. The proposals do include a council tax increase; however, we have kept to it to the minimum possible despite the high level of inflation and we continue to provide a range of support for those residents hardest hit by the cost of living.

Since becoming a unitary council in 2019, we have made efficiency savings of £76 million. This money has been reinvested to protect frontline services, including funding the growing need for adult social care with our ageing population. Our prudent budget management has meant

that Dorset has not faced the same cuts to essential services as many other areas. However, we continue to lobby Government for fairer funding for Dorset so that we can reduce the burden on local taxpayers in future.

Highways

Highway and traffic issues are always hot topics within the parish, and they continue to make up, together with planning as mentioned previously, the staple diet of my email inbox.

During my ward visit last July with Cllr Spencer Flower, leader of Dorset Council, these were highlighted by your chairman and I. He is very sympathetic to issues we raised and committed to supporting the parish in its endeavours to deal with these. Located where it is Holt suffers much from the overspill of traffic from the more urban areas of Wimborne and Colehill particularly, and the detrimental effect it has on the rural roads, together with the quality of life. The parish council has been actively seeking urgent attention to this matter and is currently working closely with officers seeking solutions.

I will continue to support the parish council in their endeavours to improve the environment, and they have certainly highlighted this subject with the decision makers and moved it higher up the agenda within Dorset Council.

Cost of living support

A number of initiatives to assist Dorset residents who are struggling during the cost-of-living crisis were implemented during 2022 including -

Generous donations from residents in Dorset, over £75K was raised to help older people struggling to stay warm this winter. Dorset Council, working closely with The Dorset Community

Foundation and Citizens Advice launched an appeal earlier this year asking people to donate any winter fuel payments they did not need to help others being able to afford heating their homes without scrimping on food.

According to government estimates, there are 19,000 people in Dorset living in fuel poverty – this means they cannot afford to heat their home. As energy prices continue to rise, even more older people will be cold in their homes and exposed to the risks arising from their body temperature dropping too low. But thanks to these generous donations, more vulnerable older people in need will stay warm over the coming months.

The funds were allocated to Citizens Advice who distributed grants to those households who are in fuel poverty.

A fund targeting vulnerable people in the Dorset Council area to help with the rising cost of living was also announced. Applications were encouraged from pensioners and working age people in receipt of qualifying benefits or in fuel poverty. The council was awarded the funding from the Government's Household Support Fund to provide short-term financial assistance.

We have also recently allocated a further £2m to assist those most impacted by the cost of

	<p>living crisis. This will be targeted in order to reach those most in need.</p> <p>If you have a particular issue about the above or any other council related business then please do contact me, details below.</p> <p>Cllr Robin Cook, Stour & Allen Vale Ward cllrrobin.cook@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Open Forum</p> <p>Cllr Robin Cook was asked what is happening with the vacant former Council Offices at Furzehill? Cllr Cook explained that there are on-going issues re probate and land ownership so unable to complete with interested purchaser.</p> <p>Cllr Cook was asked where does the value stand for the Council offices? Cllr Cook explained that this is still open to negotiation and Dorset Council is currently carrying out a complete asset review.</p> <p>Cllr Cook was asked what is happening with the Brook Road Recycling Centre in Wimborne. Cllr Cook explained that it will have to be re-sited due to its restrictive location and a new location has yet to be agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Geoff Chopping mentioned the government support available for residents not connected to mains gas and that residents may have to apply for it if they live in a postcode where there is mains gas but not necessarily all properties are connected. See https://www.gov.uk/apply-alternative-fuel-bill-support-if-not-automatic The Clerk will circulate this information on HOLT Together.</p>

Meeting Closed at 21:18

These minutes are to be signed by the Chairman after approval at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

Signed;..... **Date:**.....