

	STURMINSTER MARSHALL PARISH COUNCIL Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council on Thursday 16th July 2026 at 7pm at the Memorial Hall Present: Chair Cllr S Cade, Cllr M Steel, Cllr J Jackson, Cllr J Croucher, Cllr H Palmer, Cllr H Fookes Also in attendance: Mrs A Clothier (Parish Clerk), Inspector Adam Gill (Dorset Police)
1	<u>APOLOGIES – MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.</u> Cllr T Weaver, Cllr L Seare and Dorset Councillor W Chakawhata gave their apologies, and these were accepted. It was noted that Cllr L Purtill has resigned from the Parish Council. Action: Clerk to send ex Cllr Purtill a letter of thanks
2	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> To note new ROI forms There were none. A reminder was given to Cllrs to fill out the new Register of Interest forms by 17th July. Action: Clerk to send reminder link for the ROI forms
3	<u>PRESENTATION BY WEST COUNTRY WATER AND ENVIRONMENT REGARDING POOLE WATER TRANSFER</u> Steve and Hannah from the West Country Water and Environment Group gave a presentation on proposals for a sustainable water resource management project. The project aims to capture treated recycled water and release it into the River Stour in the Sturminster Marshall area. Water would only be pumped into the river during the summer months, with the intention of increasing river levels during periods of low flow. Over the winter, only a minimal amount of water would be discharged, and in the event of major flooding the discharge could be stopped. In response to a question regarding the source of the water, it was explained that it would be highly treated recycled wastewater from the Water Recycling Centre. The proposed Water Recycling Centre and wetland site are already owned by Wessex Water and are located behind the Admiralty. The proposed pipeline route follows the former railway line in the Broadstone area. It was acknowledged that construction would inevitably cause disruption to local communities, including temporary road closures. The project is currently expected to commence around 2030, with completion anticipated by 2034, although the construction period itself is expected to be shorter, allowing additional time for planning and engagement. It was explained that the planning process will be extensive and will include ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the community. Environmental work is already underway, including continuous bird and bat surveys. Archaeological surveys are scheduled to take place in the autumn, while utilities investigations are ongoing, some of which require temporary road closures. The principal concerns identified through engagement to date are: • Construction impacts; • Flood risk; and • River health. Steve and Hannah explained that detailed surveys and assessments, including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Statement and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), will accompany the planning application. Construction impacts will be mitigated using industry best practice, with detailed

	mitigation measures set out within the planning application. Some construction activities may need to take place overnight. River health will be monitored through regular sampling and ongoing engagement with relevant organisations. The meeting also heard that a pilot plant, comprising a scaled-down version of the proposed treatment process, has been constructed and is providing valuable operational data to verify the water recycling process. The anticipated programme includes a second public consultation in early 2027. Councillors asked a number of questions, including: • Are reservoirs being built as part of the project? It was confirmed that new reservoirs are planned nationally, but none are proposed within the Wessex area due to Dorset's unsuitable topography. • Has any discussion taken place with those seeking to extend the Trailway along the former railway line? It was confirmed that discussions have not yet taken place, although opportunities may exist through Section 106 agreements where there is a direct relationship to the development. • Will future housing growth and increased water demand affect the proposals? It was explained that projected housing growth will not alter the proposals but reinforces the need for the scheme. Discussions regarding the proposed route have already taken place with Dorset Council. The Chair thanked Steve and Hannah for attending and for delivering an informative presentation.
4	<u>MEMBERS OF PUBLIC</u> – 1 member of the public was present. The member of the public commented on the ongoing issues relating to the football goals on the Green. It was acknowledged that the Football Club had taken steps to address concerns by relocating the portable goal; however, it was suggested that the portable goal be relocated back to the position inside of the fixed goal. Concerns were also raised regarding litter being left on the Green by children. It was noted that the Police had suggested liaising with the school to encourage children to dispose of their litter responsibly.
5	<u>POLICE REPORT</u> In response to a letter from the Chair, a reply was received from the Police and Crime Commissioner who will put the Parish Council's concerns to the Chief Constable. The Parish Council highlighted the importance of being informed about neighbourhood policing team as the Parish is on the boundary so it is difficult to know who to contact. Inspector Gill explained that the village is policed by the Wimborne Neighbourhood Policing Team, with PC Louis Kellaway covering Sturminster Marshall and PCSO Nikki Sykes acting as the main point of contact. An additional officer is expected to join the team in September. The Parish Council discussed concerns regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB), rural crime and the difficulties residents experience when reporting incidents. The Police encouraged continued reporting to help build an accurate picture of local issues. The Police proposed holding regular Community Contact Points at the Memorial Hall, with Friday evenings suggested as a suitable time. The Parish Council agreed to promote these sessions and include information on reporting ASB in a future newsletter. The Police also committed to attending Parish Council meetings more regularly where operational commitments allow. Reported crime in the area is currently 35% lower than the previous year, with domestic abuse accounting for the largest proportion of reported offences. A positive experience with a police officer and the local children was noted.

	Action: Clerk to send Inspector Gill copy of the political notice and ask for contact information
6	<u>MINUTES</u> The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4th June 2026 were approved as true record of the meeting.
7	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> A report from the Clerk which had been circulated and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 3. Ongoing issues from the Clerks Report are: i. Memorial Hall Registration ii. Defibrillator at Jubilee Cross
8	<u>AMENITIES AND FACILITIES</u> i. Playground – a. To discuss playground inspection report – the report was positive with only low or very low-level concerns raised. There were some issues with the matting which the Clerk will seeks quotes for: Action: Clerk to seek quotes for matting. b. To discuss replacement of baby swings – the baby swings are safe but not compliant with new regulations. Awaiting quote. ii. Churchill Close Green a. To discuss issues with football goals – as discussed above Action: Cllr Steel to ask the football club to return the portable goal to inside the fixed goal. b. To discuss renewal of licence for Churchill Close Green – to be sent out as soon as the above issue has been resolved. iii. Maypole – Cllrs considered the contractor's advice that the proposed telegraph pole has an estimated lifespan of approximately 40 years, compared with around 10 years for a replacement tree. It was noted that the weather vane could be relocated, with a suggestion that it be installed on the roundabout. The pole will be regularly inspected and the protective collar reinstated. All in agreement to proceed with installing the telegraph pole. iv. Memorial Hall – a. To update on progress on Memorial Hall land registration – no update b. To consider quotes for legal advice on MOU – Members considered two quotations for legal advice on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It was noted that the MoU is a new document and that the relationship between the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall has operated successfully for over 30 years without this type of document. Concerns were expressed that obtaining legal advice would incur a significant cost and may not represent good value for public money, particularly as the MoU is intended to be a temporary document. Members also noted that the Hall Committee may not agree to any proposed amendments and would likely need to obtain their own legal advice, incurring further costs for them. Resolved: That the Parish Council would not proceed with the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. The resolution was carried unanimously. v. To discuss progress on the replacement/repair of benches a) To note installation of bench at Millmoor – this was noted b) To note repair of bench at Station Road – this was noted vi. To discuss defibrillator request at Jubilee Cross – it was concluded to finish this project as no source of funding could be found. vii. To discuss progress on Community Asset Transfer of Charborough Way Green – no update. viii. To discuss quote for painting of the Book Box – A quote was received however the work

	would take between 12 hours and 3 days. Investigate sharing a handyman with a neighbouring parish or town council. ix. Noticeboards a) To discuss quote for new noticeboard at Walnut Tree Green – deferred to next meeting b) To discuss lock for Front Lane noticeboard – the quote was received to replace the Allen key lock with a key lock to prevent unauthorised access. This was a cost of £70 – all in agreement. c) To discuss new cork for community noticeboards – source quote for September. Cllrs to consider other materials. x. To discuss storage location for Village Bier – the Parish Council need to find a new storage location for the village bier. Cllrs to consider locations.
9	<u>ENVIRONMENT</u> i. Climate Change Action Plan a) Sunflower growing competition – Clerk to contact the school to ask them to remind parents to send the photos of the sunflowers.
10	<u>TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT</u> i. A31 / A350 and Related Matters – The recent SGN emergency road closure at Charlton Marshall was discussed, which had caused significant disruption. The Chair reported that SGN had confirmed the closure was necessary due to an emergency incident and that they had received a high volume of complaints. SGN also advised that they intend to map the locations of the remaining steel gas pipes. Concerns were also raised regarding the A31 junction at Dullar Lane following a recent accident. It was noted that the visibility issues are due to the topography of the site, which cannot be altered, although improved signage was considered desirable. A pothole on the southbound A350 before Roundhouse Roundabout was also reported. Action: Clerk to report pothole on A350 ii. 20mph Speed Limit Application – on going iii. Jubilee Cross / Wimborne Road – on going. Action: Clerk to contact Dorset Council to query when the consultation will be live iv. Road Closures. The following forthcoming road closures were noted: Church Street – 3 to 7 August High Street – 25 to 26 August Back Lane – 7 to 18 September v. To discuss flood warning signs on Mill Lane – Cllrs considered a request from Dorset Highways regarding the installation of drop-down flood warning signs on Mill Lane. The Parish Council supported the proposal and requested that the signs be positioned before the bend. Action: Clerk to respond to Dorset Council
11	<u>REPORTS</u> To receive reports from representatives of the following: i. Alms House Charity – renovation work to take place in September. Tenant needs to move out for the duration of the works. ii. Memorial Hall – the Trustees' meeting with Dorset Community Action (DCA) on 2 July focused on fundraising and becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Memorial Hall Open Meeting was held on 9 July. It was noted that trustees are encouraged to commit to a two-year term. The proposed youth club continues to be discussed and, should it not proceed, the associated funding may need to be returned. Cllr Steel sought clarification regarding the declaration of interests as a Memorial Hall Trustee. It was noted that where the Parish Council is considering matters that directly affect the Memorial Hall, councillors who are trustees should declare their interest. Where a conflict of interest arises, a councillor may choose to withdraw from the

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- discussion and refrain from voting in the interests of transparency. Further clarification will be sought.
- iii. DAPTC – nothing to report
 - iv. Flood Wardens – Cllr Fookes is working on the Flood Plan over the Summer.
 - v. School – new Head will start in September.
 - vi. Dorset Councillor – no report
 - vii. Age Friendly Communities – Dorset Pilot – the Dorset Age Friendly Communities Pilot, is led by Dorset Council in partnership with the World Health Organisation, and aims to develop a framework for a national model. Two smaller parishes are being sought to participate in the pilot. Cllr Croucher offered to lead the project on behalf of the Parish Council.

Resolved: To express the Parish Council's interest in participating in the pilot scheme.

- i. Accounts for payment. To receive invoices and approve payments as per Schedule of payments. See **Appendix 4**. It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the payments with all in agreement.
- ii. To receive the monthly bank reconciliation– the monthly bank reconciliation, budget report was received, noted, and agreed.
- iii. To approve grants for 2026/27

The grant applications were looked at in detail and the following grants awarded:

Organisation	Amount
St Marys Church, Almer	£400
St Marys Church, Sturminster Marshall	£400
CAB	£500
Pramalife Neighbourhood Car	£700

Resolved: To make the grant awards detailed in the table above. The resolution was carried.

Cllr Steel declared an interest and withdrew from the following discussion

The Parish Council considered the Memorial Hall's application for £12,560 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) budget towards the replacement of the Hall's boiler.

It was noted that the Memorial Hall had previously received a grant of £4,900 from the Parish Council in 2025/26 for the new kitchen and £7,500 from the Parish Council CIL budget in 2026/27 towards the installation of solar panels. Cllrs acknowledged the benefits of these projects and the support already provided.

In considering the application, Cllrs discussed a range of options, including awarding no funding, making a partial contribution, or awarding the full amount requested. Concerns were raised that CIL is an uncertain income stream and that there are likely to be other infrastructure projects within the Parish over the next five years requiring funding. Cllrs therefore considered that awarding a further £12,560 would not represent an equitable allocation of the available CIL funds.

Resolved: Not to award any Community Infrastructure Levy funding towards the replacement of the Memorial Hall boiler. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Cllr Steel rejoined the discussion.

- iv. To approve bus subsidy for 2026/27 – it was noted that passenger usage figures are still awaited before determining the level of subsidy for 2026/27. Consideration will be given to increasing the contribution once the figures have been received.
- v. To note new mileage, claim allowance – Cllrs noted the increase in the approved mileage allowance from 45p to 55p per mile.

	vi. To agree quote for extra verge cut. The Parish Council considered a quotation of £520 for an additional verge cut. Resolved: To approve the quotation of £520 for an additional verge cut.
13	<u>POLICIES</u> i. To discuss update of Emergency Plan –updating the Parish Emergency Plan was discussed. It was noted that additional village volunteers would be required to act as local leads in the event of an emergency. It was suggested to establish a working group to review and update the Plan ii. To adopt Reserve’s Policy –The draft Reserves Policy was considered. Resolved: To adopt the Reserves Policy.
14	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> • Request for Outdoor gym equipment – It was noted that, should Charborough Way Green be transferred to the Parish Council, this could be a potential location, subject to any conditions imposed by Dorset Council as part of the transfer. • Wall at path to Bartons Ground. Hole appeared in Chalk – referred to Symonds and Sampson • Political poster on Parish Council noticeboard -reported to Police • Dog Public Space Protection Orders – survey closes 7th August. Clerk to complete survey.
15	<u>PARISH MATTERS</u> <u>The Parish Council meeting was suspended at 21.53pm whilst the Planning Committee took place. See minutes 16th July 2026 for details.</u> <u>The Parish meeting re-convened at 22.07pm</u>
16	<u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u> – Thursday 3rd September 2026 at 7.30pm There being no other business the meeting closed at 22.07 Signed _____Chairman 3rd September 2026

Clerks Report 16.07.26

Minute Number	Topic	Action	Progress
9 th January Minute 8 (iv)	Environment	Clerk to query Mapperton Ditch with Community Highways Officer	This is on the highways works list of jobs for this financial year.
9 th January Minute 9 (ii)	Traffic and Transport	Speed sign on Mill Lane	This is on the highways works list of jobs
5 th June Minute 7	Amenities	Memorial Hall Registration	Two quotes received for legal work on MOU and circulated – see main agenda.
17 th July Minute 7	Traffic and Transport	To move forwards with 20mph application including online consultation	Sturminster Marshall is in Round 5 of the 20mph schemes and we expect to hear more by the end of the year.
4 th September Minute 8	Asset Transfer	Clerk to contact Dorset Council about the transfer of Charborough Way Green	Awaiting outcome of consultation.
2 nd October Minute 8	Jubilee Cross Defibrillator	Clerk to investigate grant funding towards a defibrillator at Jubilee Cross.	Lytchett Motors are looking into crowd sourcing possibilities
4 th December Minute 9	Traffic and Transport	Clerk to report white lines at Church Corner.	White lines raised again with the Community Highways Officer
8 th January Minute 9	Traffic and Transport	Jubilee Cross/Wimborne Road	Ongoing – speed reduction out to consultation
2 nd April Minute 7	Millmoor Bench	Clerk to contact the landowner and place the order for the bench.	Complete and installed
2 nd April Minute 8	Flooding	Clerk to update Emergency Plan	Ongoing
7 th May Minute 12	Playground	Clerk to arrange replacement of signs	New litter signs installed – new basketball sign to be ordered but awaiting Play Area report
4 th June Minute 4	Police Report	Clerk to write to David Sidwick PCC following regarding non-attendance, and to ask the Police for a new poster	Complete. Response received and circulated.
4 th June Minute 7	Playground	Clerk to organise repair of swings	Complete.
4 th June Minute 7	Churchill Close Green	Clerk to write to the football club about removing goals.	Actioned – meeting to be held with coaches to see if anything further can be done.
4 th June Minute 7	Maypole	Clerk and Cllr Seare to liaise with Charborough Estate about sourcing a tree.	Cllr Seare to contact Charborough Estate with measurements for tree.
4 th June Minute 7	Memorial Hall	Clerk to seek advice regarding whether Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding may be used towards the replacement of a boiler.	Complete. It was confirmed that this would be an acceptable use of CIL
4 th June Minute	Book Box	Clerk to ask handyman to paint the Book Box. Special	Queried whether it was just the inside or outside too. Will be a big job – between

7		paint to be used.	12 hours and 3 days labour.
4 th June Minute 9	Traffic and Transport	Clerk to report obscured sign on A350 by SID	Complete and actioned
4 th June Minute 10	School	School Governor Representative	Phone call received from Chair of Governors to confirm that a co-opted governor vacancy will be arising. Sent email to Clerk to Governors to ask for the advert when it goes out.
4 th June Minute 10	School	Clerk to contact Police about parking at school	Email sent to policing team and then followed up on 3/7 due to further issues.
Other		Website Noticeboards Vandalism of playground signs AGAR Cups and Trophies Highways	New website drafted – Clerk to undertake training for new system Political poster put in Front Lane noticeboard by a member of the public – this was taken down Reported to the Police and crime number received All forms submitted to BDO and published on website and noticeboard Returned to storage cabinet. Overgrown vegetation at Railway Drive reported

Attended/Upcoming Training

4th June – Clerk attended Town and Larger Parish Council/Dorset Council Meeting

Schedule of Payments	June payments ratified July					
Payments made						
Payee	Details	Gross	VAT	Net	Chq No.	Invoice number
Barclays	Account Fee	£8.50	£0.00	£8.50		
Vodafone	June Phone Bill	£32.19	£5.36	£26.83	Direct Debit	
Alison Clothier	June Salary	£1,330.24	£0.00	£1,330.24	Standing Order	
		£1,370.93	£5.36	£1,365.57		
Payments to be made						
Payee	Details	Gross	VAT	Net	Chq No.	Invoice number
Alison Clothier	June expenses - mileage and Zoom subscription	£63.47	£7.78	£55.69	Transfer	
Dorset Council Pension Fund	Clerks Pension for June	£378.42	£0.00	£378.42	Transfer	
HMRC	National Insurance and Income Tax June	£285.25	£0.00	£285.25	Transfer	
SLCC	Annual Membership	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00	Transfer	
RMH Electrical Services	Relocation of electricity box	£693.60	£115.60	£578.00	Transfer	3366
Dorset DIY	Repair of bench and installation of new Millmoor bench	£598.54	£0.00	£598.54	Transfer	244
		£2,219.28	£123.38	£2,095.90		

Sturminster Marshall Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		115,751.80
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026		42,746.52
			158,498.32
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026		15,023.61
	Cash in Hand 30/06/2026 (per Cash Book)		143,474.71
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 30/06/2026	0.00	
	Barclays Current 30/06/2026	48,831.76	
	Barclays Savings 30/06/2026	71,303.35	
	CCLA 30/06/2026	25,528.99	
			145,664.10
	Less unrepresented payments		2,189.39
			143,474.71
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		143,474.71
	A = B Checks out OK		

Quarterly Financial Report – April to June 2026

Bank Balance

- The adjusted bank balance at the end of June 2026 was **£143,474.71**.

Administration

- Expenditure within this budget heading remains on track, with **£1,962** spent from an annual budget of **£10,100**.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- The Parish Council currently holds **£20,713.48** in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.
- Of this, **£7,500** has been committed towards the installation of solar panels at the Memorial Hall.

Designated Reserves

- A total of **£3,186** has been spent from designated reserves during this quarter, including expenditure on play area repairs and the repair and replacement of benches.

Employees and Governance

- Expenditure within this budget heading is currently on target.
- The national local government pay award for 2026/27 has not yet been agreed and will be reflected in the budget once confirmed.

Grants and Subscriptions

- **£4,000** remains available for the Parish Council to award through its grants scheme during the current financial year.

Maintenance and Services

- Spending remains within budget, with **£2,843** spent from an annual budget of **£23,600**.

Income

- The Parish Council has received the first instalment of the 2026/27 precept, totalling **£35,000**.
- Interest earned on investments and bank accounts to the end of June totals **£437.01**.

Reserves

The Parish Council's earmarked reserves currently stand at **£75,955.31**. These reserves have recently been reviewed and are considered appropriate to meet known future commitments.

General reserves currently stand at **£68,246**. To assess whether this level is appropriate, a forecast has been prepared using the remaining budgeted expenditure for the financial year, excluding expenditure that will be met from earmarked reserves.

Based on current spending projections, the Parish Council expects to spend a further **£55,201** during the remainder of the financial year. After receipt of the second instalment of the precept and allowing for this forecast expenditure, the projected year-end general reserve is approximately **£48,045**.

The Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) guidance recommends that general reserves should normally be maintained at between **three and twelve months'** net revenue expenditure. For smaller authorities such as Sturminster Marshall Parish Council, maintaining reserves towards the upper end of this range (around **six to twelve months**) is generally considered prudent. Unlike commercial

organisations, local authorities have very limited access to borrowing and must always remain financially solvent, ensuring sufficient cash flow while being able to respond to unexpected expenditure.

For Sturminster Marshall Parish Council, twelve months' net revenue expenditure equates to approximately **£66,850**. The projected year-end general reserve of **£48,045** represents approximately **eight months'** expenditure. This falls comfortably within nationally recognised good practice and provides an appropriate level of financial resilience for the Council.

<u>Reserve</u>	<u>OpeningBalance</u>	<u>Transfers</u>	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>CurrentBalance</u>
Earmarked					
New Playground Equipment	10,481.00	2,500.00			12,981.00
Defibrillators	1,006.20	3,993.80			5,000.00
Election	2,950.00				2,950.00
Speed Mitigation	811.00	2,000.00	716.63		2,094.37
Neighbourhood Plan	8,062.00	1,500.00			9,562.00
New Office Equipment	875.00	250.00			1,125.00
Play Area Repairs	2,604.01	1,567.48	1,171.49		3,000.00
Posts and Signage	4,102.00	500.00			4,602.00
Trees	5,097.00	1,000.00			6,097.00
Events	564.00				564.00
CIL	14,482.05			6,231.43	20,713.48
General Repairs	1,672.89	1,327.11	598.54		2,401.46
Assets	4,065.00	500.00	700.00		3,865.00
EV Charge Point					0.00
Public Art	500.00	500.00			1,000.00
Total Earmarked	57,272.15	15,638.39	3,186.66	6,231.43	75,955.31
TOTAL RESERVE	57,272.15	15,638.39	3,186.66	6,231.43	75,955.31
GENERAL FUND					68,246.66
TOTAL FUNDS					144,201.97