SYMONDSBURY PARISH COUNCIL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Symondsbury Parish Councill meeting held on Thursday 9th July 2026 at 7pm at Symondsbury School.

Statement by Chair: Cllr Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Evans thanked Caroline Pearce, Bridport Town Council, for her support in the interim period, welcomed Cllr Mooney, Dorset Ward Councillor to the meeting and welcomed Danielle Gilpin to the meeting. Cllr Evans advised that Natalie Bealing's funeral had been well attended and that everyone was thinking of her family.

0001: PRESENT: Cllrs – S Ralph, P Colfox, P Hartmann, R Elwes, B Hamblett and S Evans. In attendance: Danielle Gilpin, interim Parish Clerk, Caroline Pearce, Bridport Town Council, Paddy Mooney, Dorset Ward Councillor and Bridport Town Councillor. There were no members of the public in attendance.

0002: Disclosures of Interests and Dispensations: To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest from Councillors and employees on matters to be considered at the meeting: There were none declared. Cllrs were reminded that they have until 17th July to complete the register of interests (there were 3 councillors who had not completed at this time).

0003: Democratic Forum: None raised.

0004: Dorset Council Matters: Cllr Mooney addressed the council. He advised that there had been no Dorset Council meetings since the last meeting and that the next meeting was scheduled for the following week. He advised that members of the public had realised that he was their new councillor as he had received a deluge of correspondence which is taking him longer than he would like to deal with as he is still learning, particularly about who best to contact. On Tuesday there is a confidential discussion on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Dorset boundaries. The next stage of consultation will start end of August with the end date having been extended to end of October due to the volume of responses expected. Results will be published shortly after this. There will be an examination in principle phase. If it progresses, it will be adopted next year. An area of Symondsbury has been removed and there have been objections due to the area being within the National Landscape, issues with access, visual impact and overwhelming local services. Cllr Mooney advised that he will understand what can and cannot be shared following this meeting due to the confidentiality. Cllr Hartmann requested that we reinforce our views via Cllr Mooney as the meeting content will not be shared due to the confidential nature of this particular meeting. Cllr Hartmann advised that he will review the Parish Council's document and re-issue for Cllr Mooney to use as appropriate. Cllr Mooney confirmed that the vast majority of sites were privately owned and that the landowners cannot be compelled to sell to developers unless there is a compulsory purchase ordered. There will be a review of all Dorset Council run car parks. We employ far less parking enforcement officers than other districts. Cllr Mooney advised that there will be a meeting in 2 weeks time to discuss public services and how Dorset Council might be able to meet these needs with members of the pubic. The conversations will be ongoing over the next 6 months.

Cllr Evans stated that some land has been identified but the owner is unknown. This land is an integral part of the cycle path and it is important that we acquire this land. Cllr Hamblett stated that farmers do not wish to allow permissive path rights on their land and that where there are no owners an adverse possession order will help to identify the owners or allow the Parish Council to acquire this land. We don't need to ask Dorset Council for a compulsory order as there is a preferred option of going through the highways agency. Cllr Evans advised that the roundabouts work via the highways agency is an issue. Cllr Hamblett asked if Bridport Town Council, Dorset Council and the Parish Council could push back on the closure to be from 8.15pm so that the bus can do 2 runs on Friday night. Cllr Mooney advised that he didn't see an issue and that he would support.

Cllr Hartmann asked about a planning matter concerning a development at Tuckers Cottage that has not been actioned as of yet. It has been a year since the appeal (not just the Dorset Council refusal) and nothing has been done so is questioning Dorset Council's enforcement teams and why it is taking so long for this clean cut case? We understand that Dorset Council are dealing with legal issues but the local residents deserve an answer. Cllr Mooney advised that he believes that it was covered in the last Dorset Council meeting and that he will send a summary to Cllr Hartmann.

0005: Confirm the appointment of Danielle Gilpin as the Interim Clerk and RFO: Proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Ralph and all approved. Resolved to appoint Danielle Gilpin.

0006: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2026: The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising:

Parish Clerk to issue an expenses form for all Cllrs to use for any expense claims.

Cllrs to ensure that any Council statements should be made directly through the Parish Clerk to ensure visibility and compliance.

0007: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

The following was agreed:

- The internal auditor's (Paula Harding at Lantern Accounting) report and recommendations
- No conflicts of interest with BDO LLP
- Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
- Approval of the Accounting Statements
- Signing of the AGAR documents by the Chair and RFO
- Approval of the notice of public rights

0008: Payments and receipts:

Resolved to authorise the interim Parish Clerk and Cllrs Evans, Ralph and Hartmann to become signatories on the TSB bank account. Resolved to approve payment of CPRE, Vision ICT and the annual insurance premium, once bank access has been gained.

0009: IT Policy: Proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Ralph and approved by all. Resolved to adopt the IT policy.

0010: Planning Matters: There were no planning applications apparent to be considered.

0011: Reports from lead members:

Cllr Ralph: Footpaths: Cllr Ralph reported that out of the 2 previously reported issues, 1 (Dark Lane) had been actioned and 1 was still outstanding. It was advised that the steps have collapsed and not been replaced. A Lengthsman has now been sorted.

Cllr Hartmann: Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Hartmann advised that a report was sent yesterday as the consultation has gone through. An examiner needs to be selected and there are 3 possible candidates. The JCC will meet in September.

Cllr Hartmann: Foundry Lea/Vearse Farm: Cllr Hartmann advised that he doesn't know what has happened to the working group. It is believed that Vistry have a financial issue. The housing being built is mainly affordable housing.

Cllr Evans: DAPTC Western Area Committee: Cllr Evans stated that Will Austin from DAPTC had been very helpful during this period.

Cllr Evans: BLAP Members Meeting: Cllr Evans advised that there was nothing to report.

Cllr Evans: Community Awards: Cllr Evans advised that the Community Awards had stalled. 2 nominations had been received that will be issued awards. Cllr Evans is arranging for the prints as previously discussed with an additional copy to be issued to Nigel Bealing on behalf of Natalie, this print will be framed. The awards will be issued at the leavers ceremony on Monday 20th September. The recipients are to be invited and representation from the Parish Council is requested. Parish Clerk to email the details to all.

Cllr Evans: Church Hub: Cllr Evans advised that the hub is going ahead. There was a meeting on 25th June with the stakeholders where a plan was set out that now needs to be validated. Polling is taking place. The hub will be funded by the Wallbridge Trust. The whole process is being mapped out. A SWOT analysis is being undertaken, a PESTLE analysis may need to be considered.

Cllr Colfox:Tree Officer/Ancient Monuments: Cllr Colfox advised that a milestone was removed and put in the foundry and will be relocated once works are completed.

Cllr Colfox: Allotments: Cllr Colfox advised that he has sent a letter to the previous Cllr responsible for the allotments requesting a handover but has not received a response yet, but will chase this up. Cllr Colfox advised that we can apply to operate the allotments on Vearse Farm development but that they are not ready yet. It is hoped that we can collaborate with Bridport Town Council on these. Parish Clerk to review the allotment documentation in order to support. Parish Clerk to arrange allotment management training.

Cllr Hamblett: Resilience: Cllr Hamblett advised that he will work with the Parish Clerk and Dorset Council on this as he is looking for a structure suited to a Parish Council.

Cllr Hamblett: BLAP Housing Needs: Only report when there is a need.

Cllr Hamblett: Newsletter: Cllr Hamblett requests that the newsletter is on the agenda in October

Cllr Hamblett: Coastal Matters: Nothing to report.

Cllr Hamblett: Climate and Waterways: Cllr Hamblett raised concerns regarding the road repairs at Eype where there was some discussion but it was determined that Cllr Hamblett should pursue these issues as an individual not as a Parish Councillor.

Cllr Elwes: Waste: Cllr Elwes advised that too much waste that is at the tip is becoming landfill when it has the potential to be resold which reduces landfill and supports financial viability. Investigation continues into whether a charity like Weldmore or an individual could intercept this waste before it arrives at the tip. Need to understand if this would be possible and if there is any interest in anyone doing this. A report on intentions is requested so that approval can be sought.

0012: Clerk's update: Parish Clerk proposed new format for the agenda, minutes and financial reporting which were agreed to adopt.

0013: Any other business: It was agreed to set up a new Facebook page.

0014: Agenda items for the next Parish Council Meeting: No new items to add. Cllrs to email Parish Clerk if there is anything they wish to be added at a later date.

0015: Date and location of next meeting: Thursday 10th September 2026, 7pm at Symondsbury School

Meeting finished at 8.54pm



10/09/2026