

**MINUTES OF THE CORFE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, WEDNESDAY 26 September 2024 at 6pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr J Harrison, Cllr. B Lenthall, Cllr. C Brown, Cllr. D Bradbeer, Cllr. J Jackson, Cllr. G Alexander. Six members of the public.  
Chairman Cllr. J Harrison opened the meeting at 6pm, welcoming all.

**30/11: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

SCC Cllr. S Wakefield, SCC. Cllr R Henley and Mrs A Finchett.

**31/11: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr. Harrison: Almshouses Trust. Cllr. C Brown: Village Hall Committee.

**32/11: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 5th July 2024**

Were discussed. The minutes have been circulated, published, and signed as accurate record.

**33/11: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES**

Nothing was commented on.

**34/11: REPORTS OF COUNTY COUNCILLORS.**

SCC Cllr S Wakefield of Somerset County Council and SCC Cllr R Henley were not present due to other commitments.

**35/11: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

**PLANNING:** Cllr J Harrison – Reported he had received details of three residential applications since the last meeting for various changes that had been circulated with no objections noted.

**HIGHWAYS:** Cllr B. Lenthall – Reported that Keir is being employed by Somerset County Council to fill potholes and vent-blocked drains. The company continues to struggle to deal with its current workload and are falling behind. Residents are advised to report concerns directly to the County Council as the Parish Council have no knowledge of what works are being planned. Cllr B Lenthall will do his best to encourage resolutions.

Corfe Hill surface remains stable at present although some road signs at the top of the hill have been damaged.

Hedge cutting has also been outsourced to private contractors from Devon. Once these works have been completed our grit bins will be replenished or replaced if too badly damaged.

**RIGHTS OF WAY:** Cllr D. Bradbeer – Had nothing new to report.

**WEBSITE:** Cllr J Jackson – The website remains well used. The Keep Corfe Healthy WhatsApp group now has 95 members. The email distribution list is now 120. Thanks to Andrew Moloney for his efforts with the website and Facebook account.

**VILLAGE HALL:** Mr K Gosling/Mrs Emma Bowers – Addressed those present on current Village Hall matters. The hall electricity contract ended recently and we have signed up with EDF to a new fixed deal. However, our energy costs will still be 35% higher. Hall hiring rates which were raised will now need to remain at the new level, and an increase in the 100 Club ticket price from £12 to £15 is being proposed.

Several streams of work to improve the hall are now being explored including an improved storeroom layout, outside storage, a small meeting room, and solar power. The solar installation would follow an energy review procedure that should allow us to apply for green grants towards the cost which could be as much as £14,000. An expected payback is predicted in 8–10 years.

Following the success of the café project, new tables and chairs should be possible from funds raised. A proposal to replaster the internal walls of the hall and remove the audio tiles that exaggerate the sound in the hall are also being investigated.

The proposed extension has been put on hold due to the mounting costs involved. The small meeting room proposal could cost £20,000-£25,000.

Grants and monies already held by the Village Hall would hopefully help pay for these improvements. Once an agreed programme has been created, residents will be updated. A meeting of Hall Committee members is scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> September to get this programme rolling.

As mentioned previously due to changing circumstances the current chairperson of the Village Hall has had to step down from the Committee. We are still looking for a new chairperson to help continue the good work the hall does for the community. Full details on the role can be obtained from either Keith Gosling or Emma Bowers.

**GREEN PORTFOLIO** – Cllr. G Alexander – Reported free trees were once again being offered to parishes. The feeling of the meeting was that our parish is well equipped with trees and no more were presently needed.

**ALMSHOUSE CHARITY SELICKS GREEN REPORT** – Cllr J Harrison – Nothing to report.

**36/11: WHITE HART INN. CHANGE OF USE FUTURE PROPOSALS** – Cllr J.Harrison reported that no progress had been made on improving the current situation at our pub.

As a reminder, The White Hart Inn was purchased from Stonegate Group PLC in 2022 for £325,000. No remedial work has since been carried out by the owner and no attempt has been made to show a public house is not a viable option. The property was purchased and neglected, and it is currently an investment the owner is sitting on for capital gains in his pension fund. Following failure to gain planning permission, the owner has now listed the building for sale at £395,000.

The Parish Council has attempted to find a bidder. It should be noted the owner could still turn down any bid as he already has done with other serious potential buyers.

Cllr. J Harrison has been approached by an interested party about turning the pub into a single residence for his family. However, he does not want to waste his time or money if the Parish Council was in principle against a change of use. A brief discussion took place with those present in which the interested party introduced himself and his reasons behind such a move. It was agreed by those present that, as the situation currently stood, the Parish Council would in principle have no objection to a change of use but that normal procedures for such a change would have to be followed. This would also involve the usual public consultation.

**37/11: FINANCES** – Cllr J Harrison provided an update on finances as of 25th September 2024. Our current cash position is a bank balance of £31,560.92. We also have protected funds of £3,327 reserved for the Corfe Gateway project.

Payments made since last meeting on 5th July 2024 include: B.Lenthall (Footpath, £90), Parsons Landscapers (£324.58), Somerset Local Council (£85.96), SALC (£88.44).

Total being £588.98.

Income since last meeting 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024 = HMRC (£565.10), website advert (£20.00).

**38/11: CORRESPONDANCE** – Cllr J Harrison reported none received since our last meeting.

**39/11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – Cllr J Harrison had three items to present.

1. Christmas trees for village display are proving costly and we have been approached for support in purchasing them. Councillors agreed to fund this request.

2. As previously reported, benches within our parish have reached their ‘sell-by date’ and are considered not repairable cost wise, so we intend to replace them. A discussion took place on the cost of the different types of bench. It was agreed the benches on Queens Acre produced using recycled materials are now better for the environment and will incur less maintenance in the future. So, these will be what we go for. Should anyone wish to contribute to these purchases it was agreed that as a thank you a plaque could be put on your bench. Please contact the Parish Council if you feel you could do this - it would be much appreciated. Current costs are likely to be £350 per bench.

3. The next meeting of local community network (LCN) area 18 (of which Corfe is a part) will take place at Churchinford Village Hall on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October. Major issues will include speeding, housing, flooding, and road repairs. Members of the public are welcome to attend and if you wish to represent Corfe, please inform Cllr J. Harrison who will be happy to update you.

The History Tree on Queens Acre needs refurbishment. It was agreed the cost involved will be met by the Parish Council. Mrs A. Jeffery will investigate costs etc.

The waste bin on Queens Acre appears to not be emptied on a regular occurrence. Cllr J Harrison will investigate if this becomes a more permanent situation due to council cutbacks.

There remains a vacancy for a new councillor on Corfe Parish Council. Please consider applying. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

**PLEASE NOTE ALL MEETINGS ARE NOW ON A WEDNESDAY WITH A NEW  
START TIME OF 6.30PM.**

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 6.30pm.**